Assessment of DCOF-Supported Child Demobilization and Reintegration Activities in Sierra Leone

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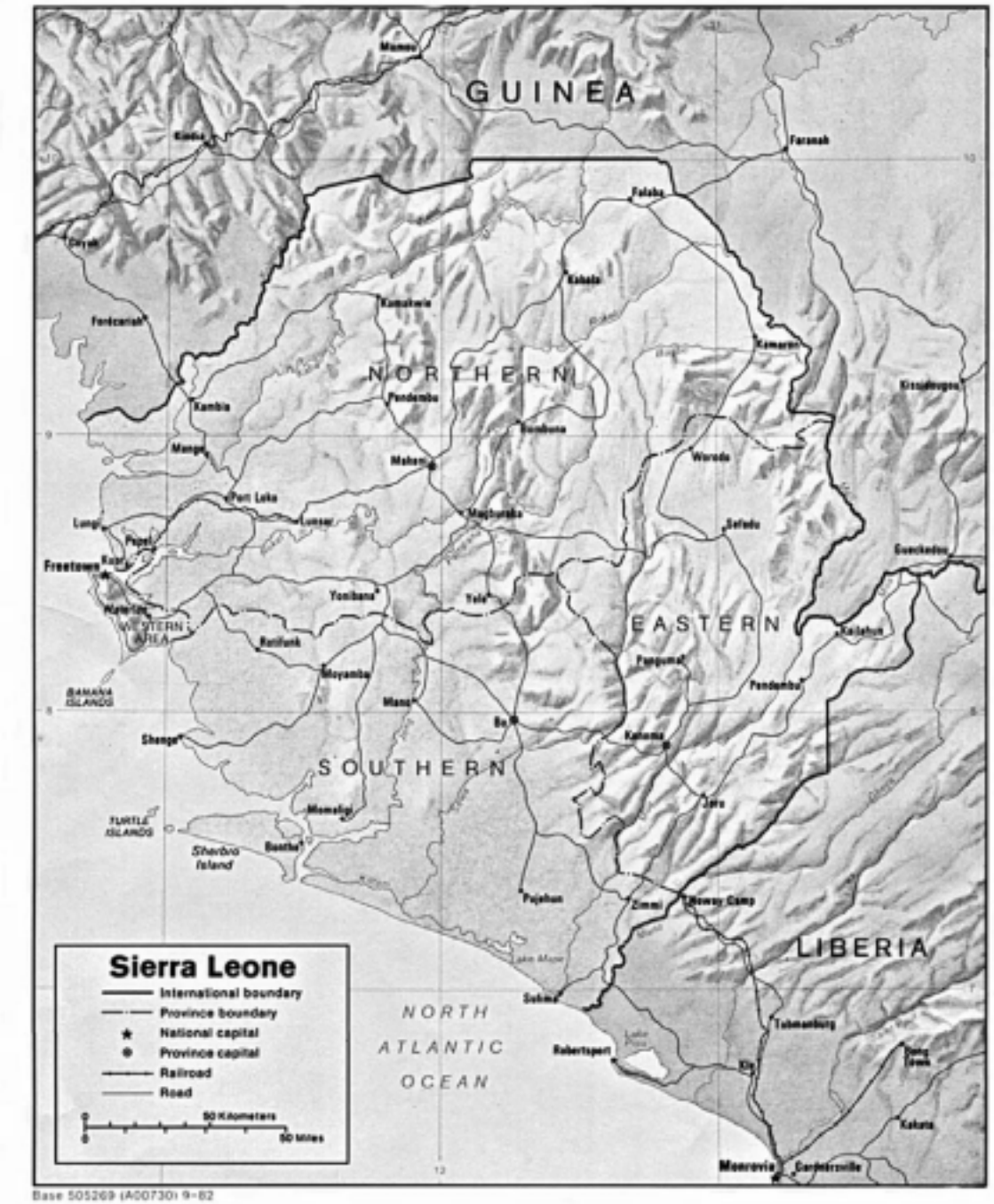
CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CDF	Civil Defense Force
CEIP	Community Education Investment Program
CESSI	Cherry Engineering Support Services
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPN	Child Protection Network
CREPS	Complementary Rapid Response for Primary Schools
CTA	Community Teacher Association
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group
EO	Executive Outcomes
HACU	Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
HDI	Human Development Index
ICC	Interim Care Center
ICF	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs
NACSA	National Association for Child Support Action
NCDDR	National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
PTA	Parent Teacher Associations
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SMC	School Management Committee
TIP	Trafficking In Persons
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
UNHACU	UN Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOT	Victims Of Torture
WARP	West Africa Regional Program


GUINEA
NORTHERN
EASTERN
SOUTHERN
WESTERN AREA
LIBERIA
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
Freetown
Kenema
Kailahun
Pujehun
Bonthe
Sherbro Island
BANANA ISLANDS
TURTLE ISLANDS
Sierra Leone
International boundary
Province boundary
National capital
Province capital
Railroad
Road
50 Kilometers
50 Miles
Base 505269 (A00730) 9-82

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first three decades of Sierra Leone's independence were characterized by multiple coups, unrest, and power grabbing. The turbulence of the previous three decades escalated in 1991 and ushered in a decade of civil war known globally for its viciousness and brutality. In March 1991, a small band of fighters loyal to Charles Taylor (then warlord, now president) of Liberia and mercenaries from Burkina Faso invaded eastern Sierra Leone. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, took responsibility. The RUF attacked farmers, villages and miners. The aims initially declared by the RUF, since thoroughly contradicted by its actions, involved ending corruption and bringing peace to Sierra Leone. The RUF's strategy was also characterized by abducting children during village raids. Sometimes these children were forced to commit atrocities against their own family or village to instill the sense that they would not be able to return. Many of the girls abducted were abused sexually, with some eventually becoming "bush wives" who are informally attached to a single combatant. While some of the most brutal acts were widely covered in the media, such as the abductions and chopping off of hands and arms, the chronology and causes of the war were less widely known.

From 1992 to 1994 the conflict was characterized by increased rebel activity in diamond mining areas and a growing number of civilian casualties due to attacks on villages. The Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) launched a recruiting drive during this time that included children as young as 12 years old. In May 1994, Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African private security firm, was hired to provide security assistance. With the additional help of EO the Army was able to push the RUF back from Freetown as well as retake Moyamba and mining areas. EO also began a training and support program with the Kamajor militia, a local defense force.

Elections were held in February and March 1996. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) won the presidency in a runoff. Kabbah and Sankoh embarked on peace talks, but agreement was initially stymied over the issue of withdrawal of foreign forces and EO. The Abidjan Peace Agreement was finally signed in November 1996; one condition was that EO was to leave the country. Six months later, on May 25, 1997, a coup resulted in the flight of President Kabbah to Guinea; the release of hundreds from prison; and widespread looting, destruction, and harm to civilians. The Armed Forced Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was established, which suspended the constitution, and joined forces with the RUF. By June 3, the AFRC/RUF coalition was in control of Freetown. Efforts to move toward peace and disarmament under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN) continued throughout 1997. These efforts included the expansion of the mandate of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was already in place in Liberia, to include Sierra Leone. ECOMOG, AFRC, RUF, and the civil defense groups agreed to a disarmament plan on December 9, 1997.

ECOMOG gained control of Freetown early in 1998. President Kabbah returned to the city on March 10, 1998. Although ECOMOG was able to expand its presence throughout the country during the year, many RUF forces evaded capture and the security situation deteriorated severely by the end of the year. The RUF launched a major offensive on Freetown in January 1999 dubbed "Operation No Living Thing," which resulted in immense destruction and horrific loss of life and limbs, along with the abduction of approximately 1,500 children.

Kabbah and Sankoh signed a ceasefire agreement on May 18, 1999, and direct peace talks began a few days later. The talks renewed many elements of the previously signed Abidjan Agreement including demobilization and disarmament and the transformation of the RUF into a political party. The Lomé Peace Agreement was signed by Kabbah and Sankoh on July 7, 1999. In October, UN Security Council Resolution 1270 established the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and authorized a peacekeeping operation of up to 6,000 troops. Numerous violations of the cease-fire agreement were documented and the disarmament process was woefully behind schedule with only 23 percent of an estimated 45,000 soldiers disarmed by the December 15 deadline.

In February 2000, UNAMSIL's size was increased to 11,000 troops. As UNAMSIL slowly expanded its presence throughout the year, it was met with resistance and violence by the RUF, especially in the east and north of the country. At one time, 500 peacekeepers were held captive by the RUF. By the end of the year the UNAMSIL force size was 13,000. Another ceasefire agreement between the government and the RUF, the Abuja Agreement, was signed in November. An increase in the British military presence in summer 2000 deterred further fighting and helped to support the November cease-fire.

In 2001, the country appeared to be on a steady, if sometimes rocky, road to peace. On March 30, a further increase in the UNAMSIL force size was authorized to 17,500 military personnel, including the 260 military observers, making it the largest UN peacekeeping operation in the world. UNAMSIL, the Sierra Leone Army, and police officers deployed throughout the country. Key roads and bridges were re-opened, increasing access to communities long isolated by the war. The disarmament process, resumed in May 2001, finally commenced in Kenema and Kailahun Districts in November; these were the last two districts to start disarmament. Though briefly derailed by a flare-up of violence in December 2001 and January 2002, the disarmament process proceeded. It concluded in January 2002. For the first time in a decade, it was possible to travel almost anywhere in the country.

A sense of optimism is present in Sierra Leone today, with the disarmament and demobilization process having concluded relatively successfully and with the completion of peaceful elections in May 2002. The peace and security of the country, however, is by no means assured. The fate of Sierra Leone has always been greatly influenced by regional participants and realities. The future peace in the country will be affected by the escalation or diminution of conflict in Guinea and Liberia.

The challenges facing the new Kabbah government within the country are great, including reducing corruption, increasing government transparency, restoring basic services to a war-

ravaged country, and stimulating employment and income generation. Progress in each of these areas will be important to redress some of the underlying causes of the previous conflict and to create an environment where frustrated, impoverished people will be less likely to turn to armed conflict.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Process

With the signing of the Abuja cease-fire agreement in May 2001 the RUF agreed to resume and participate in the disarmament process which had been stalled since May 2000. The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process in Sierra Leone is the first time that child combatants have been explicitly and intentionally given particular attention in a peace agreement. All the parties involved in the development and implementation of this work deserve recognition for this achievement that establishes a crucial precedent.

The National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (NCDDR) reports that a total of 6,904 children were demobilized during and after the conflict in Sierra Leone. By 1999, 848 were demobilized, and in 2000, another 1,513 were demobilized–most through special initiatives. From January 2001 through January 2002, the total was 4,543. It is primarily the situation of this latter group of children that this report addresses.

Children who met the following criteria were eligible for entry into the demobilization program, including reintegration assistance:

- Between the ages of 12 and 17
- Able to handle a weapon
- Presented by a commander as a combatant

Children between the ages of 7 and 11 were eligible for entry into the demobilization program if any of the following criteria applied:

- Learned to cock and load a weapon
- Trained in the use of arms
- Spent more than 6 months with the fighting forces
- Held a rank
- Were used as a spy or participant in raiding missions

These criteria, especially for older children, had important implications for the DDR process. A first requirement, that children be presented by a commander, has resulted in some children not entering the DDR process. A second and even more worrying constraint of the demobilization criteria was that non-combatants controlled by the fighting forces were excluded. The fate of the girls and women who had been abducted is of particular concern. Many familiar with the conflict in Sierra Leone believe that a large number of girls and young women who were abducted as children remain under the control of their RUF commanders.

When demobilization resumed in May 2001, there was considerable pressure to disarm combatants as rapidly as possible, which may account for the decision to focus the process exclusively on arms-bearing combatants. According to the Cape Town Principles adopted in 1997, a child soldier includes combatants and non-combatants alike. By applying the three demobilization eligibility criteria, some children who need demobilization and reintegration assistance have been left out of the process.

DCOF Involvement in Sierra Leone

Established in 1989 by an act of the US Congress, the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) is administered by the Office of Health and Nutrition of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Fund has evolved into a program that focuses on issues of loss and displacement among three groups of children in the developing world: children affected by armed conflict, street children, and children orphaned and otherwise made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

DCOF began supporting children affected by armed conflict in Sierra Leone through a grant to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1998. This was supplemented by a cooperative agreement to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in 2000.

DCOF total grant support to UNICEF to assist the demobilization and reintegration of child combatants in Sierra Leone is $2,250,000 for activities through September 30, 2002. The grant supports the following five objectives:

1. Reunite and reintegrate separated children with families and communities.
2. Develop long-term options for children who cannot be reunified.
3. Ensure that unaccompanied and other vulnerable children have access to basic education, primary health care, and safe water.
4. Strengthen the capacity of the Child Protection Network (CPN) in Sierra Leone.
5. Produce a compendium of best practices on interim care, reunification, and reintegration of war-affected children.

DCOF support for IRC has totaled $1,590,570 and is due to end in March 2003. IRC's overall goal is to facilitate the rehabilitation and community reintegration of demobilized children in interim care centers (ICC) as well as that of other war-affected children in the southern and eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. The project has the following four objectives:

1. Facilitate the recruitment and training of demobilization and reintegration staff in partnership with local NGOs and associations.
2. Develop, implement, and supervise a program of activities for war-affected children in demobilization centers, ICCs, and internally displaced person (IDP) centers.

3. Develop a reintegration program for war-affected children that is community-oriented and family-based.
4. Support local NGOs and community group initiatives aimed at sustaining adequate and meaningful activities for reintegrating war-affected children into their communities.

In May 2002, DCOF sent two technical advisors, John Williamson and Lynne Cripe, to Sierra Leone to assess the progress of the two programs as well as to identify areas for possible future DCOF support in the country as it enters this important transition period.

Observations and Lessons Learned in UNICEF and IRC Programs

Effective Collaborative Approach

UNICEF has provided critically important leadership regarding child protection in Sierra Leone. It has helped the government to play its roles more effectively and to develop coordination and standards of good practice among the many local, national, and international NGOs involved in the identification and care of separated children, tracing, family reunification, demobilization of child soldiers, and community reintegration.

A striking aspect of the response to separated children and demobilized child soldiers in Sierra Leone, in contrast to many other situations, is that there is an effective, integrated system involving a large number of civil society organizations and committees and the government. The demobilization framework developed by the Child Protection Committee (which has since become the Child Protection Network) helped shape the process that began on a significant scale in 2001. The framework encouraged protection of all vulnerable children, including combatants, street children, and separated children, and recognized the particular risks faced by girls. It identified family reunification as the principle factor in the social reintegration of child soldiers. The Child Protection Network has grown to 40 members, including United Nations bodies, national and international NGOs, and government ministries. It was an active member of the Technical Coordinating Committee of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (NCDDR).

It should be acknowledged that the development and functioning of the Child Protection Network has not been without problems and some inter-organizational differences. There have been, for example, delays for some children because of the limited capacities of some of the members of the tracing network and delays in the procurement of vitally needed equipment. Such problems, however, should not obscure the fact that, on whole, the system has worked. Of the 2000 caseload of separated children (including former child soldiers), 91 percent have been reunited with a family member. Of the 2001 caseload, 52 percent have been reunified. Most of the separated demobilized and non-demobilized children (Sierra Leonean children returned from Guinea) who have not been reunited with their families have been placed in foster families or community-based care appropriate to their ages and needs.

Community Committees

One of the important lessons that the government and NGOs have put into practice in Sierra Leone is that the ongoing safety and well-being of vulnerable children depends upon development of child-focused community groups. Much of the effectiveness of reunification and reintegration has been due to the identification, monitoring, and protection roles of community committees. District-level personnel from the Ministry of Social Work, Gender, and Child Affairs (MSWGCA) are responsible for organizing CPCs. Much of IRC's work has depended on local child welfare committees it has helped to form.

Reintegration Going Well for Demobilized

Given the years of horrendous experiences that most children associated with fighting forces encountered during the war, conventional wisdom would suggest that childhood would be lost forever and that reintegration into their families and communities would be difficult, if not impossible. The experience of the last 3 years tells a much more hopeful story. The vast majority of the children who have been demobilized appear to be doing well, whether they are living with their immediate family, extended family, in foster care, or in supervised independent living. They have been accepted by their communities and are in school or learning a trade. Based on their follow-up work, both IRC and Save the Children (UK), two of the major implementing agencies in the reunification and reintegration of former child soldiers and other separated children, estimated that approximately 90 percent of the former children soldiers had been able to reintegrate well within their families and communities.

Reintegration, in terms of social acceptance, has been easiest for the children who were part of the Civil Defense Force (CDF). Most of these children remained in their communities or at least nearby. They were respected by others in their villages as protectors. Ironically, a large number of the children who were with the CDF were excluded from the demobilization process and prevented from taking part in the educational and training opportunities that have been provided for former child soldiers.

Children who were abducted by the RUF, however, were oftentimes not welcomed home. At first, community members expressed hatred and fear of these children and never wanted to see them again. Many children with the RUF had been forced to kill family members or neighbors and had been living in the bush and fighting for five or more years. Even the NGO staff members of ICCs were initially targets of community hostility because of the presence of children who had been with the RUF.

Successful reintegration was not achieved easily. Mediation with families, patient sensitization work in communities, traditional cleansing ceremonies, and caring and supportive attention to former child soldiers has, however, brought about a remarkable transformation of the children, their families, and their communities.

Critical Elements

At least six kinds of intervention seem to have contributed to successful family and community reintegration:

1. Community sensitization.
2. Demobilization and a period of transition to civilian life.
3. Tracing and family mediation.
4. Return to the family and community with follow-up.
5. Traditional cleansing ceremonies.
6. School or skills training.

Key Issues

DCOF should consider further action in Sierra Leone regarding three issues:

1. Girls who remain under the control of their abductors.
2. Community involvement in re-establishing and sustaining schools.
3. Documentation and dissemination of lessons learned.

Abducted Girls

Many girls who were abducted by the RUF, some who are now young women, remain under the control of their commanders or "bush husbands." Although there are no definitive estimates of how many girls were involved or associated with the fighting forces, based on the rate of abductions of girls by the RUF, especially in 1999, child protection agencies believe that many more girls were involved with the fighting forces than have come through the DDR process.

Girls may feel that having had a baby while with the RUF makes them unacceptable to their families because of the stigma and additional financial burden. Although the war relationships were forced, the men in the relationships are likely to view the girls as their wives and, therefore, be unwilling to let them return to their families. More information is needed about the current situation of abducted girls.

Education

Challenges and opportunities abound in the education sector in Sierra Leone. One constraint is that many schools were destroyed or seriously damaged during the war; another is that many schools lack an adequate number of trained teachers. Poverty is a pervasive barrier, with many families unable to pay even minimal fees for uniforms and supplies. In addition to the obvious educational value of restoring schooling, doing so has important psychosocial benefits for children
by providing structure and normalizing activities after years of fear, upheaval, and displacement.

Sierra Leone is faced with important choices about the fundamental nature of its educational system. While the team had a limited opportunity to explore the plans of the Ministry of Youth, Education, and Sports, at the time of the team's visit it appeared that the ministry's goal was to re-establish the same system that was in place at the beginning of the war, with teachers provided by the ministry, management of schools provided by ministry personnel, and very limited community involvement.

Significant experience elsewhere in the region suggests that a more community-oriented approach would be a better choice. Even if resources can be made available to rebuild schools, the government will find it difficult to generate sufficient resources necessary to operate these schools on an ongoing basis—the failure to do so could fuel future conflict. A different approach would be for the government to express its commitment to education, admit its limitations, and commit itself to a partnership approach through which the responsibility of managing schools would be shared between representatives of the ministry and the community.

Documentation and Dissemination

Organizations in Sierra Leone are generating important lessons regarding tracing and reunification, children's demobilization, social reintegration, how to reach girls associated with fighting forces, and how to balance the needs of demobilized children with other war-affected children. These lessons are relevant beyond Sierra Leone and should be documented and disseminated among organizations doing work in child protection and social welfare in other countries. This experience has particular relevance for those countries that may soon be undertaking DDR programs including Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Afghanistan.

DCOF encourages organizations in Sierra Leone, northern Uganda, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda to develop a formal process of exchanging experiences and lessons learned concerning child soldiers and other separated children.

Recommendations

UNICEF

1. UNICEF should work with members of the tracing and child protection networks, including MSWGSA, to achieve the following:

    - Develop estimates of the number of abducted children still missing
    - Document cases not already included in the separate children's database
    - Trace as many of these children as possible

2. UNICEF should develop and submit to USAID/Sierra Leone and DCOF a proposal for the development and coordination of efforts to identify, reunify, and reintegrate abducted children–in particular, girls.

3. UNICEF should work with members of the child protection and tracing networks to draw from their experiences in Sierra Leone lessons, approaches, methods, and tools relevant to the disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers and tracing, family reunification, and community reintegration of former child soldiers and other separated children.

4. One objective of UNICEF's current agreement with DCOF is to produce a compendium of best practices on interim care, reunification, and reintegration of war-affected children. This should be completed by the end of the current grant period.

5. UNICEF should actively engage in the recently launched e-mail exchange among DCOF partners in Angola and Sierra Leone on the experiences of demobilization, tracing, reunification, and reintegration.

IRC

6. IRC should continue to use remaining DCOF funds to identify, reunify, and reintegrate girls and young women abducted as girls.

7. IRC should play an active role in promoting the exchange of experiences among organizations working with children affected by armed conflict and document lessons, approaches, methods, and tools from its programs in Sierra Leone and elsewhere, including involvement in the e-mail exchange referred to in Recommendation 5.

DCOF

8. In providing any future support in Sierra Leone, DCOF should give priority to interventions in the districts of Kono, Kailahun, and Koinadugu.

9. DCOF should seek to provide financial and technical support for outreach, tracing, reunification, and reintegration support for abducted girls who have not been able to return home.

10. DCOF should collaborate closely with USAID's West Africa Regional Program (WARP) on the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Mano River Union program for women and children abducted or otherwise victimized by armed conflict. DCOF is in a position to provide relevant technical assistance to WARP or its partners to assist in the design of a technically sound program.

11. As its second priority for the provision of funding in Sierra Leone, if DCOF is able to make funds available, it should determine whether strategic support could help Sierra Leone involve communities as active partners in initiating, managing, and developing education and training for children.

CONTEXT OF SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone, a West African country with a population of approximately 5.4 million, is bordered by Guinea to the north and east and Liberia to the south. It is a country characterized by diversity in its land and people. Sierra Leoneans come from 20 different native African tribes, with the Temne and Mende tribes each comprising 30 percent of the population. Approximately 10 percent of the population are Creole, descendants of freed slaves who settled in the Freetown area in the late-eighteenth century. There are also small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakstanis, and Indians. An estimated 60 percent of the population are Muslim, 10 percent are Christian, and 30 percent adhere to indigenous beliefs.

The country has consistently hovered near the bottom of indexes of health, social, and economic development for the past decade. Economic development has been constrained by a weak infrastructure, widespread corruption, and civil war.

In the 2001 Human Development Report, Sierra Leone ranks last of all 162 countries included in the Human Development Index (HDI).[1] A sample of indicators illustrates the dire situation for the country and its people.

- Life expectancy in Sierra Leone is 38.3 years
- Approximately 57 percent of the population lives on less than US$1 per day
- Total fertility rate per woman is 6.5
- Less than one-third of the population is using improved water sources or adequate sanitation facilities
- There are 7 physicians for every 100,000 people
- More than 30 percent of children die before reaching 5 years of age

In early May 2002, the United States Centers for Disease Control announced the preliminary findings of an HIV prevalence study in Sierra Leone. The prevalence was found to be approximately 5 percent for the country and approximately 6 percent in the Freetown area.

During the course of the war a substantial portion of the population was displaced, either within the country or outside. At the beginning of 2001, some 400,000 Sierra Leoneans were refugees, including 300,000 in Guinea, 70,000 in Liberia, and 10,000 in Gambia.[2] Since that time, the

[1] The HDI measures the overall achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development—longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. It is measured by life expectancy, educational attainment (adult literacy and combined primary, secondary, and tertiary enrollment), and adjusted income per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) in US dollars. The HDI is a summary; not a comprehensive measure of human development.

[2] *World Refugee Survey 2001*, U.S. Committee for Refugees, Washington, D.C, p. 101.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has helped approximately 90,000 refugees to return.[3]

An estimated 95,000 refugees from Sierra Leone remained in Guinea at the beginning of 2002. Less than 15,000 displaced persons remained in camps in Sierra Leone at the end of April 2002, and an estimated 162,000 Sierra Leoneans refugees had returned from Guinea, either spontaneously or with UNHCR assistance.[4] Since February, the country has been receiving refugees in a new influx from Liberia. In mid-May, there were some 136,000 Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone, 24,000 of whom had arrived during the recent influx. Many new arrivals are being accommodated in camps, but the majority are disbursed in urban areas.[5]

Although Sierra Leone is currently one of the poorest countries in the world, it has the potential for economic development. The country's agricultural potential can be developed as the mainstay of the economy. Significant steps have been taken to establish mechanisms for legitimizing the diamond trade and generating some revenue for development. The country also has reserves of rutile, iron, and timber. Fishing could be developed, and there is also potential for tourism and offshore oil exploration.

The country is divided into three provinces—Eastern, Northern, and Southern—and a western area that includes the capital, Freetown, and its surrounding environment. The provinces are subdivided into 13 districts, which, in turn, are divided into 150 chiefdoms.

History and Background of Conflict

In understanding current events in Sierra Leone, including causes of the recently-ended civil war, it is useful to review some of the history of the country. In 1787, 400 freed slaves settled among the indigenous residents of Freetown. In 1808, Freetown was made a British colony. In 1953, the British established a new bureaucratic system, leading to a wider diffusion of political power to local chiefs.

Independence was declared on April 27, 1961, and Sir Milton Margai of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was elected prime minister. The next 30 years were characterized by multiple coups, unrest, and power grabbing. Sir Albert Margai, Milton Margai's brother and replacement, attempted to amend the constitution to create a one-party state. After the election of Siaka Stevens of the All People's Congress (APC), a coup led by David Lansana prevented Stevens from taking office in 1967. Over the next 13 months three coups took place, one of which eventually brought Stevens to power. In 1978, Stevens adopted a single-party constitution, but in 1990, President Joseph Momoh declared his support for a multiparty democracy and a new constitution was drafted.

[3] "Home for the Elections in Sierra Leone," May 14, 2002, from UNICEF web site on May 31, 2002.
[4] Information provided by UNHCR personnel in Kemema, Sierra Leone.
[5] "Liberians Arrive in Sierra Leone," Briefing Notes, UNHCR, May 14, 2002, from UNICEF web site on May 31, 2002.

The turbulence of the previous three decades escalated in 1991 and ushered in a decade of civil war known globally for its viciousness and brutality. The Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) strategy was characterized by abducting children during village raids. Sometimes these children were forced to commit atrocities against their own families or village to instill the sense that they would not be able to return. Many of the girls abducted were abused sexually, with some eventually becoming "bush wives" who were informally attached to a single combatant. While some of the most brutal acts were widely covered in the media, such as the abductions and chopping off of hands and arms, the chronology and causes of the war were less widely known. In March of 1991, a small band of fighters loyal to Charles Taylor (then warlord, now president) of Liberia and mercenaries from Burkina Faso invaded eastern Sierra Leone. The RUF, led by Foday Sankoh, took responsibility. The RUF attacked farmers, villages, and miners. The aims initially declared by the RUF, since thoroughly contradicted by its actions, involved ending corruption and bringing peace to Sierra Leone.

The eastern part of Sierra Leone is blessed and cursed with diamonds found close to the earth's surface. From 1992 to 1994, the conflict was characterized by increased rebel activity in diamond mining areas and a growing number of civilian casualties due to attacks on villages. In April 1992, junior army officers carried out a bloodless coup that sent President Momoh to exile in Guinea. The officers formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and installed Captain Valentine Strasser as chairman. The Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) launched a recruiting drive during this time that included children as young as 12 years old. In May 1994, Strasser hired Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African private security firm, to provide assistance. With the additional help of EO, the army was able to push the RUF back from Freetown and retake Moyamba and mining areas. EO also began a training and support program with the Kamajor militia, a local defense force.

In mid-January 1996, Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio replaced Strasser as NPRC chairman in another coup. He promised that elections would be held on schedule. Elections were indeed held in February and March and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP won the presidency in a runoff. Kabbah and Sankoh embarked on peace talks, but agreement was initially stymied over the issue of withdrawal of foreign forces and EO. The Abidjan Peace Agreement was finally signed in November 1996; one condition was that EO was to leave the country. Six months later, on May 25, 1997, a coup resulted in the flight of President Kabbah to Guinea; the release of hundreds from prison; and widespread looting, destruction, and harm to civilians. The Armed Forced Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was established, suspending the constitution, and joining forces with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). By June 3, the AFRC/RUF coalition controlled Freetown. Efforts to move toward peace and disarmament under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations were continued throughout 1997. These efforts included the expansion of the mandate of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was already in place in Liberia, to include Sierra Leone. A fourteen-point disarmament plan was agreed to by ECOMOG, AFRC, RUF, and civil defense groups on December 9, 1997.

ECOMOG gained control of Freetown early in 1998. President Kabbah returned to the city on March 10, 1998. Although ECOMOG was able to expand its presence throughout the country

during the year, many RUF forces evaded capture and the security situation deteriorated severely by the end of the year. In January 1999, the RUF launched a major offensive on Freetown dubbed "Operation No Living Thing," resulting in immense destruction and a horrific loss of life and limbs, along with the abduction of approximately 1,500 children.

Kabbah and Sankoh signed a cease-fire agreement on May 18, 1999. Direct peace talks began a few days later. These talks renewed many elements of the previously signed Abidjan Agreement including demobilization and disarmament and the transformation of the RUF into a political party. The Lomé Peace Agreement was signed by Kabbah and Sankoh on July 7, 1999. In October, UN Security Council Resolution 1270 established the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and authorized a peacekeeping operation of up to 6,000 troops. Numerous violations of the cease-fire agreement were documented and the disarmament process was woefully behind schedule with only 23 percent of an estimated 45,000 soldiers disarmed by a December 15 deadline.

In February 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1289, which increased UNAMSIL's size to 11,000 troops. As UNAMSIL slowly expanded its presence throughout the year, it was met with resistance and violence by the RUF, especially in the eastern and northern parts of the country. At one point in time, 500 peacekeepers were held captive by the RUF. By the end of the year, the UNAMSIL force size was 13,000. Another cease-fire agreement between the government and the RUF, the Abuja Agreement, was signed in November. An increase in the British military presence in summer 2000 helped to deter further fighting.

The country appeared to be on a steady, if sometimes rocky, road to peace in 2001. On March 30, a further increase in UNAMSIL force size was authorized to 17,500 military personnel, including 260 military observers, making it the largest UN peacekeeping operation in the world. UNAMSIL, the SLA, and police officers deployed throughout the country. Key roads and bridges were re-opened, increasing access to communities long isolated by the war. The disarmament process resumed in May 2001 and was commenced in Kenema and Kailahun, the last two districts to start disarmament, in November. Though briefly derailed by a flare-up of violence in December 2001 and January 2002, the disarmament process proceeded.[6] It concluded in February 2002. For the first time in a decade, it was possible to travel almost anywhere in the country.

While horror of the war in Sierra Leone drew some media coverage, the underlying causes of the war were often left undiscussed and unexplored. The International Crisis Group (ICG) in its April 2001 report, *Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy*[7] identifies several root causes of the conflict. It is important to understand these causes in terms of the overall context of the country. They also lend important insights for the work of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) in Sierra Leone. Among the root causes that ICG identified are the following:

[6] This history and chronology is drawn from "Chronology of Selected Events in Sierra Leone" by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

[7] International Crisis Group, *Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy*, April 11, 2001, ICG Africa Report No. 28. Available at: http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/africa/westafrica/reports/A400278_11042001.pdf

- **Bad government**: Since independence, truly democratic, accountable government has been absent in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the rich natural resources of the country have been exploited for personal gain by politicians and private citizens and tends to undermine democratic or state institutions. The illegal diamond trade, a source of funding for weapons, was cited as the most extreme example of this problem.

- **Unaccountable military**: Prior to the eruption of civil war in 1991, the army in Sierra Leone was relatively small, consisting of approximately 3,000 troops. It grew to approximately 13,000 in 1991 and 1992 to repel the RUF. This rapid expansion, combined with poor leadership, training, and equipment created the "sobel" phenomenon–"soldiers by day, rebels by night." In the mid-1990s there was a common perception that violence and attacks against civilians were as much a result of the actions of the army as the rebels.

- **Civil Defense Force (CDF)**: In light of the army's inability to protect civilian populations, President Kabbah initiated the CDF. The CDF was composed of members from the six major ethnic groups in the country. The most powerful were the Kamajors, representing a traditional Mende hunting group. Ostensibly to protect civilians, the CDF recruited adolescents into its ranks and found itself fighting the RUF and the army.

- **Ethnic politics and exclusion**: The main political parties in Sierra Leone have tended to receive support along ethnic lines. The SLPP has drawn support primarily from the Mende in the south of the country, while the All People's Congress (APC) has drawn support from northern tribes, especially the Limba and Temne. Although the north was favored under Siaka Stevens' rule in 1970s and early 1980s, power shifted to the predominantly Mende south with the 1996 election. This power differential was also observed in the armed forces that were dominated by northerners. The current political analysis suggests that a significant task of the next government, elected in May 2002, will be to bring the previously neglected eastern and northern areas and tribes into full social, economic, and political participation.

- **Militarization of youth**: All armed parties in the conflict–RUF, CDF, and the government armed forces–conscripted or recruited young people, in particular those who were alienated, disaffected, and unemployed. Not only did the militarization of youth serve as an important root cause of the conflict, the reintegration of these young people back into communities and the provision of economic opportunities for them will be a key task during the transition period.

Elections

Multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections were held on May 14, 2002. Widely regarded as generally free and fair, President Kabbah won a plurality of votes, granting the SLPP a 5-year period of leadership. The RUF had a particularly poor showing in the elections, even in their traditional strongholds of Kono and Makeni. An exception to this trend, however, was Johnny Paul Koroma, the former chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and collaborator with the RUF, who won a seat in parliament.

A sense of optimism is present in Sierra Leone today with the disarmament and demobilization process having concluded relatively successfully and with the completion of peaceful elections. The peace and security of the country, however, is by no means assured. The fate of Sierra Leone has always been greatly influenced by regional groups and realities. The future peace in the country will be affected by the escalation or diminution of conflict in Guinea and Liberia.

The challenges facing the new Kabbah government are great. They include reducing corruption, increasing government transparency, restoring basic services to a war-ravaged country, and stimulating employment and income generation. Progress in each of these areas will be important to redress some of the underlying causes of the previous conflict and to create an environment where frustrated, impoverished people will be less likely to turn to armed conflict.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Process

After the signing of the Abuja cease-fire agreement in May 2001, the RUF agreed to participate in the disarmament process which had been stalled since May 2000. Some of the details of that process are relevant to understanding some of the current challenges Sierra Leone faces. The official disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process included both RUF and CDF forces, though not forces from the SLA. An estimated 45,000 combatants, adults, and children, were expected to enter the process.

According to the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (NCDDR), a total of 48,228 individuals were disarmed and demobilized during the 13-month period of January 2001 to January 2002.

Table 1. Gender Breakdown of Child and Adult Demobilization

	Below 18		Adults		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	4,269	9.5	40,765	90.5	45,034	100
Female	274	8.6	2,920	91.4	3,194	100
Total	4,543	9.4	43,685	90.6	48,228	100

The Education for Peace Program, implemented by World Vision and supported by USAID, has served adults who have come through the DDR process. Former fighters were trained to become the trainers for the program. Participants receive training in individual and social responsibilities; literacy and numeracy; health, including HIV/AIDS; and business or agriculture. This training has been done throughout the country and has helped encourage social cohesion. Some 40,000 participants have come through the program and another 25,000 participants are being trained.

After completing this program, participants have the option to undertake agricultural or vocational training and to receive a stipend while they are in training.[8]

Demobilization of Children

The Lomé Peace Accord was the first document to specify that child combatants would be given particular attention and handled differently than adults in a demobilization and reintegration process. The DDR process in Sierra Leone has reflected this critically important precedent.

Demobilization of child soldiers began in November 1998. It started and stopped depending upon political and military developments until May 2001, however, when the DDR process began to work again and the pace greatly accelerated. During this period there were many different groups that influenced the process to differing degrees. These groups included

- Rebel groups (RUF, SLA/AFRC)
- CDF and local population
- ECOMOG
- UNAMSIL
- NCDDR
- UNICEF
- Child protection NGOs (e.g., Caritas Makeni, Save the Children Fund (UK), IRC)

Each of the different groups involved had different understandings about what had been agreed regarding children associated with the fighting forces and different opinions about the importance of addressing this issue in operations. Likewise, there were different views about how child fighters, on the one hand, and camp followers such as bush wives and other non-combatant children should be involved in the DDR process. Military observers did not necessarily recognize child protection NGOs as having a role in the demobilization process. Consequently, advocating and negotiating for the release of children and arranging for them to be handed over was an ongoing process.

There were many differences among the children associated with the fighting forces. Not only were some children active combatants and others not, many had been abducted whereas others were children of adult combatants. Some children were anxious to return home if given the opportunity; others did not see home as an option.

NCDDR reports that a total of 6,904 children were demobilized during and after the conflict in Sierra Leone. By 1999, 848 were demobilized, and in 2000, another 1,513 were demobilized, most through special initiatives. From January 2001 through January 2002, 4,543 children were demobilized. It is primarily the situation of this latter group of children that this report addresses.

[8] The International Crisis Group Africa Report No. 35, *Sierra Leone: Managing Uncertainty*, October 24, 2001 discusses the overall DDR process, including some important weaknesses and concerns. The full text of the report can be found at: http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/africa/westafrica/reports/A400474_24102001.pdf

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the fighting forces from which children were demobilized between January 2001 and January 2002.

Table 2. Affiliation of Demobilized Child Soldiers

RUF				CDF				Total*			
Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2,590	90.7	266	9.3	1,662	99.6	7	0.4	4,269	94.0	274	0.6

*Total includes 18 child combatants (17 male and 1 female) from the former SLA, AFRC Council, and other groups.

Children who met the following criteria were eligible for entry into the demobilization program, including reintegration assistance:

- Between the ages of 12 and 17
- Able to handle a weapon
- Were presented by a commander as a combatant

Children between the ages of 7 and 11 were eligible for entry into the demobilization program if any of the following criteria applied:

- Learned to cock and load a weapon
- Trained in the use of arms
- Spent more than 6 months with the fighting forces
- Held a rank
- Were used as a spy or in raiding missions

During screening, children received a briefing from a social worker on the demobilization process. If any child refused to go through the demobilization process after the briefing, he or she could be transferred to an interim care center (ICC). Additionally, if a social worker deemed that a child under the age of 7 was involved in the conflict and would benefit from the demobilization process, he or she could be classified as eligible.[9]

These criteria had two important implications for the DDR process. The first criterion requiring that children be presented by a commander resulted in some children not entering the DDR process. A child could meet the second criterion in one of two ways, depending on the UNAMSIL personnel involved in the screening process. Some children simply had to

[9] According to UNICEF, most children above seven years of age would have received training in the use of arms. However, most children initially denied any involvement in the conflict as they did not want to be associated with the atrocities committed during the war. Unless children were assured that they would not be punished, they tended to give false names and categorize themselves as camp followers or cooks. It was not the role of the social worker to determine the level of involvement of the child in the fighting forces, but to ascertain whether it was in the best interest of the child to go through the demobilization process. Experience has shown that regardless of the level of involvement of the child in the conflict, they were perceived by the families and communities as participants in the conflict if they had spent any period of time with the fighting forces.

demonstrate their ability to lock and load a weapon; others had to pass the more demanding test of disassembling and reassembling a weapon.

Second, though there are no exact figures available, it is known that thousands of girls and young women were abducted during the war and forced to become sex slaves or "bush wives" for rebels. Although 273 girls were released to UNAMSIL and child protection agencies, commanders were unlikely to present their wives for demobilization.
Since the organization of the CDFs in 1996, it has been widely known and reported that many of those included in the forces were children below age 18. A 1998 report cited by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers indicated that a CDF field commander estimated that their forces in the eastern Kailahun District included 3,000 child soldiers.[10] A 1999 *New York Times Magazine* article reported that Sierra Leonean Government officials said that children made up one fifth of the 25,000 CDF.[11] Even so, during the demobilization process, the CDF high command made an announcement denying the existence of any child combatants among their forces. One of DCOF's partners reported that after this announcement CDF children who were brought forward for demobilization in Pujehun and Kenema were categorically denied access to the process by the UN military observers based on the announcement by the CDF high command. Another informant attributed the CDF's announcement to political embarrassment over the fact that more child soldiers were being demobilized from the RUF than the CDF.

The position taken by the senior CDF authorities prevented many children who have returned home from benefitting from the reintegration assistance that otherwise would have been available to them. Table 2 shows the breakdown of demobilized child combatants among combatant groups.

A second and even more worrying constraint of the demobilization criteria was that non-combatants who were controlled by the fighting forces were excluded. The fate of the girls and women who had been abducted is of particular concern. Many persons familiar with the conflict in Sierra Leone believe that a large number of girls and young women who were abducted as children remain under the control of their RUF commanders. Some parents who have an idea where their daughters are and with whom they are staying are afraid to confront the abductors or lack the means to travel. The requirement of the DDR process that a child demonstrate his/her status as an actual combatant excluded children who may have offered "support" services or others who acted as camp followers. This requirement effectively excluded a large number of girls who had been abducted and kept as bush wives or sex slaves or had been used in other ways.

No one knows with certainty how many children were abducted during 12 years of war in Sierra Leone. Based on information from the government and child protection partners, UNICEF has indicated that 8,466 children were officially documented as "missing" between 1991 and 2002; it estimates that girls accounted for between 50 to 57 percent of this number. The total number

[10] "The Use of Children as Soldiers in Africa: A Country Analysis of Child Recruitment and Participation in Armed Conflict," March 1999, Geneva, p. 95.
[11] Jan Goodwin, "Sierra Leone Is No Place to Be Young," February 14, 1999, p. 48.

includes 4,448 children who were reported missing in 1999 alone. Thousands of girls and young women abducted during the war were forced to become sex slaves or bush wives for rebels. Other young girls were forced to carry out domestic tasks. In addition to the constraint of demobilization being limited to those who could demonstrate that they had been combatants, another factor that reduced the number of girls and women who were demobilized was that commanders were disinclined to give up their "wives." Furthermore, some ex-combatant boys remain with their commanders, particularly in Makeni and mining areas like Kono and Tongo where they are working for their commanders.

In May and June 2001, special releases of children from RUF and AFRC forces were carried out. These releases required extensive negotiation and preparation by UNAMSIL's child protection advisor and child protection agencies, which allowed them to advocate for the release of girls and to clarify conditions of the release, eligibility, and arrangements of care. This situation offered advantages in that there was more time for and attention to sensitization and logistical preparation in advance of demobilization. In addition, many more girls were presented for the special releases than in the regular process. A decision was later made, however, by those responsible for the DDR process that no more special arrangements would be allowed and that all children would come through the regular DDR channels. One reason for this decision may be the concern that the special releases allowed the commanders to have too much authority in deciding which children would or would not be released. There may have been additional concern that the special releases allowed "non-genuine" cases to be brought forward and, therefore, demobilization numbers to be exaggerated in the media. Another factor appears to have been a decision to focus the DDR process on those who were bearing arms and to exclude other children associated with the fighting forces.

When demobilization resumed in May 2001 there was considerable pressure to disarm combatants as rapidly as possible, which may account for the decision to focus the process exclusively on arms-bearing combatants. According to the Cape Town Principles adopted in 1997, however, a child soldier is "any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms." A 1997 report of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children says that male combatants who managed to escape from various RUF base camps reported that "young captive women constitute the majority of the base camp communities they had left."[12] By applying the three demobilization eligibility criterions, children who need demobilization and reintegration assistance have been left out of the process.

Decisions about the specifics of when, where, and how disarmament and demobilization would be carried out in a specific area were sometimes (of necessity) taken quickly, and child protection NGOs often had to move very quickly to be able to play a role in the process. There

[12] "The Children's War: Towards Peace in Sierra Leone," A field report assessing the protection and assistance needs of Sierra Leonian children and adolescents, March 26 to April 16, 1997, p. 13.

were many logistical constraints. It was sometimes difficult for child protection NGOs to gain access to areas were demobilization was to take place. In some situations there were different understandings about how the demobilization of children should be carried out. Problems arose when there was a failure to recognize and handle differently children who had been abducted and separated from their families from children of adult combatants.

It was important for UNICEF and others to train, orient, and sensitize foreign military personnel (UNAMSIL and ECOMOG in earlier stages) regarding agreements, procedures, and specific actions regarding the demobilization of children. Due to rotation and turnover among military personnel, this process had to be repeated periodically. Even with procedures having been established, it was often necessary for UNICEF and NGOs with child protection responsibilities to advocate and negotiate to protect the safety and interests of children associated with the fighting forces.

The demobilization process in Sierra Leone has yielded the following important lessons that other countries embarking on demobilization may wish to heed.

- Child soldiers include both combatants and non-combatants and both boys and girls. Political agreements and procedures for demobilization and reintegration must reflect this reality.
- Ongoing communication and advocacy is essential.
- It is important to recognize and give humanitarian attention to young adults (male and female) who were abducted or otherwise forced as children to become part of a combatant group.
- The training of peacekeepers or military observers must include specific attention to procedures and considerations regarding children.
- There are too many contingencies that arise during the course of a DDR process to specify in advance procedures to handle them all. Therefore, DDR procedures and training should allow for on-the-ground decision-making in keeping with key child protection and human rights principles and recognize the standing of UN and designated child protection NGOs as parties to such decision-making.
- Cultural and other constraints affect recognition by children associated with fighting forces that family reunification may be an option for them and their receptivity to it. Active communication efforts are needed to address these issues. Video and tape-recorded messages from former child soldiers who have successfully returned home can be useful tools in this process.

DCOF INVOLVEMENT IN SIERRA LEONE

Established in 1989 by an act of the United States Congress, DCOF is administered by the Office of Health and Nutrition of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). DCOF is supported by the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and War Victims Fund Technical Support Project managed by Cherry Engineering Support Services (CESSI). The Fund has evolved into a program that focuses on issues of loss and displacement among three groups of children in the developing world: children affected by armed conflict, street children, and children orphaned and otherwise made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

UNICEF

DCOF began support for children affected by armed conflict in Sierra Leone through a grant to UNICEF in 1998. This support was supplemented by a cooperative agreement to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in 2000. Following a 1998 grant, DCOF awarded a grant of $1,500,000 to UNICEF in February 1999 to support the demobilization and reintegration of child combatants in Sierra Leone. The grant was later amended to raise the total to $2,250,000, with a completion date of September 30, 2002. The grant supported the five following objectives:

1. Reunite and reintegrate separated children with families and communities.
2. Develop long-term options for children who cannot be reunified.
3. Ensure that unaccompanied and other vulnerable children have access to basic education. primary health care, and safe water.
4. Strengthen the capacity of the Child Protection Network (CPN) in Sierra Leone[13].
5. Produce a compendium of best practices on interim care, reunification, and reintegration of war-affected children.

Activities for children associated with the fighting forces in Sierra Leone that UNICEF has supported have included protection, basic services, family tracing and reunification, education, skills training, recreation, psychosocial support and medical care, and community reintegration. For children whose family could not be traced, alternative care, including foster care and supervised group independent living have been arranged. These services are provided by NGO partners to which UNICEF provided funding as well as technical support and oversight. Once the demobilization process began, ICCs became the primary base from which such activities

[13] This work included the development and strengthening of a national Child Protection Network and regional CPNs in the Western Area and the Northern, Southern, and Eastern Provinces. The CPNs have played a major role in guiding new agencies to operate within policy guidelines and also encouraged standardized approaches to the handling of issues in the field.

were carried out. By May 2002, however, few children remained in the ICCs, most having been reunited with their families or placed in alternative care.

Some children had been physically scarred with letters representing the various fighting forces– RUF, AFRC, and EX SLA. These letters were cut into various parts of the body, including the forehead, chest, arms, and back as a means of terrorizing the children or preventing escape from the fighting forces. In 2001, DCOF provided an additional $75,000 to UNICEF for a sub-grant to the International Medical Corps for plastic surgery and other medical services to remove scars or tattoos on children.

The following chart shows UNICEF's partners, the services they provide, and the amount of DCOF funding provided:

Table 3. UNICEF Subgrants with DCOF Funds

Implementing Partner	Services	Funds in USD
COOPI	ICC and medical services	**131,483**
Caritas Makeni	ICC, family tracing and reunification, demobilization	**71,368**
International Medical Corps	Scar removal	**45,205**
Handicap International	Psychosocial support	**24,514**
Xaverian Missionaries	ICC, Alternative care, family tracing and reunification	**5,467**
Norwegian Refugee Council	Community Education Investment Program	**15,307**
Save the Children (UK)	Family tracing and reunification	**8,402**
CEIP implementing partners and Ministry of Education	School supplies	**14,564**
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	Family tracing and reunification	**5,475**
Funds not yet spent		**371,664**
TOTAL		**693,449**

IRC

In addition to the funding provided to UNICEF, DCOF funds were also provided to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for its work with children in connection with the DDR process. DCOF support for funding to IRC began with a cooperative agreement in April 2000 and is due to end in March 2003. The total estimated cost of the project is $1,590,570. The overall goal is to facilitate the rehabilitation and community reintegration of demobilized children in ICCs as well as that of other war-affected children in the southern and eastern provinces of Sierra Leone.[14] The project has four objectives:

1. Facilitate the recruitment and training of demobilization and reintegration staff in partnership with local NGOs and associations.
2. Develop, implement, and supervise a program of activities for war-affected children in demobilization centers, ICCs, and internally displaced person (IDP) centers.
3. Develop a reintegration program for war-affected children that is community-oriented and family-based.
4. Support local NGOs and community group initiatives aimed at sustaining adequate and meaningful activities for reintegrating war-affected children in their communities.

In May 2002, DCOF sent two technical advisors, John Williamson and Lynne Cripe, to Sierra Leone to assess the progress of the two programs as well as to identify areas for possible future DCOF support in the country as it enters this important transition period. The Scope of Work and itinerary for the assessment team can be found in Appendix A and B. The team's principal contacts are listed in Appendix C.

[14] Although the program was originally launched in Bo and Kenema, there was extensive geographic expansion in Pujehun and Kono Districts in 2001. This expansion stretched resources for transport, office support, computers, and other overhead costs.

PSYCHOSOCIAL WOUNDS AND HEALING

In this report the team presents its assessment of activities DCOF has supported. Psychosocial issues are prominent among those addressed by these programs. Because there is significant technical disagreement among those who carry-out and support this kind of programming regarding the nature of the psychosocial impacts of armed conflict on children and how these impacts can be addressed effectively and appropriately, this section presents background on DCOF's perspective pertaining to these issues.

Nature of Trauma

Psychosocial trauma is a disruption of an individual's ability to connect appropriately with his or her social environment, including the family. It is a misconception to see war-related trauma as a psychological condition within individual children that is treated by helping the child to overcome her or his individual distress. Psychosocial trauma is fundamentally psychosocial– psychological and social factors are integral aspects of its causes and its healing.

Psychosocial trauma involves a disconnection between the way children understand the world to be and the way they experience it. Psychosocial distress is caused by experiences that are fundamentally inconsistent with the child's expectations of the world, especially the family environment and his or her place in it. War shreds the basic human connections that give life meaning.

The expectations children have with adults are particularly important. War-related trauma may disrupt their ability to connect with other people. For the overwhelming majority of children affected by war, family reunification and community reintegration are both a goal and the process of recovery.

The psychosocial impacts of armed conflict appear to be greatest when a child's experience undermines his or her social connections and integration—the way the child sees and understands his or her primary relationships within the family and with others. While one child may experience armed conflict without serious, long-term effects, the same experiences may devastate another child. The more a child sees him or herself as protected and guided by adults with whom he has close attachments, the less likely it is that an experience will cause lasting psychological harm. Children separated from their families are particularly vulnerable, and surrogate family care and family reunification are especially important for them. Children forced to commit atrocities against their own families or other children (a tactic used by the RUF) face rejection by their community and the sense that they have severed their basic social attachments.

The nature of war trauma for children was succinctly described by Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham in *War and Children*, a book based on research during the Second World War:

> The war acquires comparatively little significance for children so long as it only threatens their lives, disturbs their material comfort or cuts their food rations. It becomes enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life and uproots the first emotional attachments of the child within the family group.[15]

Addressing Trauma

Responding effectively to psychosocial distress requires responses that are appropriate to the nature of the problems being addressed, the context in which they are being addressed, and the culture and belief systems of the people concerned.

Because effects are both psychological and social, interventions must address the relationship of the individual to his or her social environment. It is not just a matter of treating traumatized individuals through counseling or other interventions. For children who have been abducted or otherwise separated from their families by armed conflict, family and community reintegration is not only a fundamental goal, it is central to the process of alleviating their distress. Persons who have been abducted cannot be healed and sent home. The family and the community need to be part of the process of healing because they are part of the wound. Counseling may be part of a process of recovery, but is not sufficient by itself.

Increasing awareness of children's inherent needs and rights not only helps develop a basis to improve the protection of children in the future, it also helps create a more supportive environment in which war-affected children can recover and develop in healthy ways.

Evolution of Interventions

The ways that psychosocial issues are addressed, or not addressed, is determined in part by how they are understood. Developing a clearer understanding of the nature of the problems being addressed is fundamental to increasing the coverage and effectiveness of psychosocial interventions in Sierra Leone. In the 1980s, when an increasing number of national and international bodies began to respond to what have come to be called psychosocial issues, a psychological framework and approach were usually applied. This led to attention to individual psychological trauma and relied largely on culturally adapted counseling as a primary intervention. Much of the methodology used and research on which these activities were based had been derived from experiences in developed countries with helping individuals recover from the effects of a specific traumatic event. The diagnosis of post traumatic stress disorder evolved

[15]New York: Medical War Books, 1943, p. 67, as quoted in Everett Ressler, Joanne Marie Tortorici and Alex Marcelino, *Children in War: A Guide to the Provision of Services: A study for UNICEF*, New York, 1993, p. 181.

out of psychotherapeutic work in the United States with veterans of the war in Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s. These frameworks for understanding and addressing psychosocial distress and disturbance have been applied by relief agencies in conflict situations in the developing world with varying degrees of success.

Over time, the limitations and inadequacies of such a trauma-focused, individually-oriented framework and approach have been recognized by organizations addressing the needs of children in conflict situations. The practical impossibility of providing individual or group counseling to thousands of people in a situation of conflict and displacement became increasingly evident. Experience has also shown that counseling provided by a specialist external to the community is not always acceptable or effective. Approaches used by Western therapists to help individuals recover from a particularly traumatic event may not be relevant in a context where exposure to violence is ongoing, not just a single event. Also, evidence indicates that lay practitioners and peers can effectively offer support and assistance to people experiencing distress or in crisis.

In addition, there has been increasing recognition that helping the large majority of children affected by armed conflict to recover has more to do with helping them to get back on track in meeting their developmental needs than it does treating their trauma. Adult coping and behavior generally is built on the foundation of having mastered developmental tasks at successive stages during childhood. Armed conflict plays havoc with children's opportunities to meet these developmental needs. Establishing such opportunities must be a fundamental priority in programming that is intended to benefit children.

Western agencies have also come to recognize the fundamental role that belief systems play in recovery from psychosocial distress—they affect how we give meaning to our experiences and affect our ability to relate to our social environment. The power of belief systems has been underscored by the effectiveness of traditional healing as used in a number of situations of conflict and displacement in resolving what relief agencies understood as psychological trauma. We have cited examples in Sierra Leone where various cleansing rituals that families or communities carry out when formerly abducted children return home have apparently improved their acceptance by their families and communities and helped the children, themselves, feel more acceptable. Likewise, formal religious beliefs, institutions, and leaders can play an important part in the recovery of people who share the same beliefs.

Organizations addressing the needs and promoting recovery of former child soldiers and other children in situations of conflict and displacement have broadened their understanding of psychosocial distress. There has been a shift away from a focus on treating trauma towards community-based efforts to protect children and promote their well-being and development. Organizations have given increasing attention to

- Essential roles of the family and community
- Significance of child development
- Need to normalize daily life
- Importance of play
- Value of structured activities and education

- Potential effectiveness of traditional healing
- Differences in resilience among children depending upon their experiences prior to exposure to violence
- Influence of child rights advocacy

No organization has come up with all the answers to the most effective ways to address psychosocial distress in conflict situations, but members of the International Save the Children Alliance have made a major contribution with their elegantly concise, "Promoting Psychosocial Well-Being Among Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement." Organizations working in Sierra Leone may find the guidance this document provides useful. Other recent publications that have reflected practical approaches and the importance of such issues include the following:

- *Helping Children in Difficult Circumstances: A Teacher's Manual* (Save the Children, 1991).
- *Children in War: A Guide to the Provision of Services* (UNICEF, 1993).
- *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care* (UNHCR, 1994).
- *Children: The Invisible Soldiers* (Rädda Barnen, 1996).
- *Restoring Playfulness: Different Approaches to Assisting Children Who Are Psychologically Affected by War or Displacement* (Rädda Barnen, 1996).
- *Communicating with Children: Helping Children in Distress* (Save the Children, 2000).
- *Action for the Rights of the Child: Foundations: Working with Children* (UNHCR & International Save the Children Alliance, 2001).

Organizations working with separated children in Sierra Leone on psychosocial issues are accumulating significant experiences from which organizations working in other situations could benefit. Although much has been done and learned, no expert, organization, or group of organizations has yet come up with all the answers for how best to meet the needs of children profoundly affected by armed conflict. Each new situation has unique aspects, raises new challenges, and brings new insights. It is vitally important that organizations working in Sierra Leone benefit fully from what others have learned and contribute their own lessons to the growing body of knowledge.

Severe Distress

In a conflict environment, a small number of children may find their coping strategies overwhelmed and develop severe reactions that meet Western diagnostic criteria for psychiatric disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, somatoform disorder, or even psychosis. There is vigorous debate about the degree to which these constructs can be applied in a non-Western context. Without getting caught up in the nuances of the debate, it is important to recognize that some children may experience more extreme reactions that do not respond to the aforementioned community-based interventions. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate to develop more specialized and individual interventions, such as psychopharmacology, to address their suffering and restore the flow of development.

OBSERVATIONS ON UNICEF AND IRC PROGRAMS

Effective Collaborative Approach

UNICEF has provided critically important leadership regarding child protection in Sierra Leone. It has helped the government to play its roles more effectively and to develop coordination and standards of good practice among the many local, national, and international NGOs involved in the identification and care of separated children, tracing, family reunification, demobilization of child soldiers, and community reintegration, ranging from establishing minimum standards of care in ICCs to developing codes of behavior for journalists when interviewing children.

A striking aspect of the response to separated children and demobilized child soldiers in Sierra Leone, in contrast to many other situations, is that there is an effective, integrated system involving a large number of civil society organizations and committees as well as the government. The groundwork for the effective demobilization, reunification, and reintegration work that has been done in Sierra Leone was laid over a period of years. In November 1996, the Ministry of Social Work, Gender, and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA), with the support of UNICEF, established the Family Tracing and Reunification Network. In 1997, after the coup by the AFRC left the AFRC/RUF junta in control of most of the country, many organizations evacuated their personnel to Conakry, Guinea. With UNICEF's leadership, the Child Protection Committee was formed, including representatives of MSWGCA in exile, Sierra Leonian NGOs, some international NGOs, UNICEF, and the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (UNHACU). In addition to coordinating ongoing tracing work, the network developed a series of guidance documents concerning the protection of children affected by armed conflict. These included an interagency child protection strategy paper, policy guidelines for the care and protection of separated children, guidance regarding psychosocial interventions, and a planning framework for the release and demobilization of children associated with the fighting forces (including both underage fighters and other children involved with support activities).

The demobilization framework developed by the Child Protection Committee (which has since become the Child Protection Network) helped shape the process that began on a significant scale in 2001. The framework encouraged protection of all vulnerable children, including combatants, street children, and separated children, and recognized the particular risks faced by girls. It identified family reunification as the principle factor in the social reintegration of child soldiers. It recognized that simply tracing family members and sending children home would not suffice. Acknowledging that some children had participated in attacks or committed atrocities against their home villages, the framework said that special efforts would be required to facilitate their acceptance, including community sensitization and mediation by advocates for the children and

the involvement of traditional and religious leaders. The demobilization framework also cited the socioeconomic distress of many communities and families as a barrier to family reunification and reintegration.

In March 1998, when the Kabah Government returned to Freetown, the Child Protection Network was able to strengthen and coordinate an effective interagency tracing network, guided by documents that had been developed in exile. Based on the effective leadership that it had demonstrated in 1998, USAID committed DCOF funds to UNICEF to support its leadership and programming in child protection. UNICEF continued to play effective leadership, monitoring, and coordination roles as well as to support the government's child protection and social welfare roles. The Child Protection Network has grown to 40 members, including United Nations bodies, national and international NGOs, and government ministries. It was an active member of the Technical Coordinating Committee of the National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (NCDDR).

While there are differences among the NGO programs focused on reuniting and reintegrating separated children and former child combatants, there is remarkable consistency among their approaches because of the coherent programs and networks for information exchange and collaboration that have been developed by UNICEF together with MSWGCA.

It must also be acknowledged that the development and functioning of the Child Protection Network has not been without problems and some inter-organizational differences and conflicts. There have been, for example, delays for some children because of the limited capacities of some members of the tracing network and some delays in the procurement of vitally needed equipment, particularly motorbikes, to facilitate tracing and follow-up. Such problems, however, should not obscure the fact that, on the whole, the system has worked. Of the 2000 caseload of separated children (including former child soldiers), 91 percent have been reunited with a family member. Of the 2001 caseload, 52 percent have been reunified. Most of the demobilized child soldiers and separated Sierra Leonean children returned from Guinea who have not been reunited with their families have been placed in foster families or community-based care appropriate to their ages and needs.

Within the global relief development community, the evolution over the last two decades of operational guidance and programming to benefit children affected by armed conflict has often been highly contentious. Part of the worth of the Child Protection Network in Sierra Leone is evidenced by the fact that it has provided a mechanism for such differences to be identified and, as far as possible, sorted out.

Community Committees

One of the important lessons the government and NGOs have put into practice in Sierra Leone is that the ongoing safety and well-being of vulnerable children depends on development of child-focused, community groups. Much of the effectiveness of reunification and reintegration has been due to the identification, monitoring, and protection roles of community committees.

District-level personnel of MSWGCA are responsible for organizing CPCs. Much of IRC's work has depended on local child welfare committees that it has helped to form. Community-teachers' associations are central to IRC's work to reestablish and strengthen schools. The Christian Children's Fund helps the communities in which it works to establish *Pikin Paddi* ("Friends of Children") groups that take the lead in identifying and responding to child protection, reintegration, and well-being issues. Save the Children (UK) has helped communities in which it works to establish foster parents' associations for mutual support among those caring for children other than their own. It has also helped communities to organize effective CPCs. In Daru, for example, the local CPC was organized by the district welfare officer. It includes traditional leaders, representatives of the police, two children, and other community leaders. When children were making the transition from the local ICC to their families, the CPC mediated when there were community conflicts regarding children who had been with the RUF. The CPC in Daru also passed a local law that stopped the practice of beating and publicly shaming children who wet their bed. Previously, a child who had wet his or her bed would be smeared with chicken feces and paraded through the village carrying a container for chickens.

Discos and Debates

The Kids' Club in Daru is a particularly impressive grassroots initiative established by children on their own initiative. Many of those involved had been in the local ICC. Members have organized discos and debates. They have helped to identify separated children in the community, both responding directly to their needs and helping them link with locally available services. Save the Children Fund (UK) has helped them organize four workshops in Theater for Development, an experiential learning approach that equalized children and adults and that helps them analyze their own problems and conduct community-level advocacy. Children develop their own plays, and after a performance, they engage the audience in a discussion. To equalize participants, everyone sits on the floor. Kids' clubs have spread from Daru to two other towns in the vicinity. About 35 percent of the participants are girls. One of the Kids Clubs has started an income-generating agricultural project to raise money for school expenses of disabled children in the community.

Recognizing Children's Special Demobilization Needs

All the parties involved in the development and implementation of the ground-breaking demobilization process in Sierra Leone should be commended for their attention to the rights and special needs of these children. However, eligibility criteria were established that excluded some important categories of children who were associated with the fighting forces.

Among these excluded children were adolescent girls who were abducted and forced to become sex slaves, bush wives, or domestic servants for rebel commanders; abducted children used in other ways by the RUF; and some of the children who were with the CDF—some of whom returned home without going through the demobilization process and others who were excluded from it. Because they were not formally demobilized, these children are not able to access official reintegration assistance from NCDDR and UNICEF.

Some child soldiers were excluded from the demobilization process by the requirement of being presented for demobilization by a commander. IRC reports that when its staff members now make follow-up visits to check on demobilized children now in communities, they typically identify additional children who had been with the CDF or the RUF and who were either excluded from the demobilization process or escaped from or left their commanders before the process began.[16] The consequence for these children is that they are not entitled to participate in the education and training programs to which the demobilized children have access.

The children who were with the CDF and returned home on their own may not have had immediate care and protection needs as great as children who came through the official process. Nonetheless, their experiences during the war were essentially the same and they share many of the same needs: acute health problems, need for normalization, access to education or skills training, and others. In future demobilization exercises, such as the one being planned in Angola, the overall success of recognizing children's special role and needs in the DDR process can be improved by recognizing that different categories of children exist and may come through official and non-official channels, and that all these children need attention, assistance, and follow-up.

Reintegration Going Well for Demobilized

Given the years of horrendous experiences that most children associated with the fighting forces encountered during the war, conventional wisdom would suggest that childhood would be lost forever and that reintegration into their families and communities would be difficult, if not impossible. The experiences of the last 3 years, however, tell a much more hopeful story. The vast majority of the children who have been demobilized appear to be doing well, whether they are living with their immediate family, extended family, in foster care, or in supervised independent living. They have been accepted by their communities and are in school or learning a trade.

Based on their follow-up work, both IRC and Save the Children (UK), two of the major implementing agencies in the reunification and reintegration of former child soldiers and other separated children, estimated that approximately 90 percent of the former children soldiers had been able to reintegrate well within their families and communities. IRC is collaborating with the Oxford University Refugee Studies Center in a longitudinal study of the psychosocial well-being of former child soldiers. This study should yield valuable information about the efficacy of different approaches to facilitating reintegration.

Follow-up interviews over the next 2 years can help determine whether the community acceptance and apparently successful reintegration is sustained over time. It is already clear, however, that some reunifications have not been successful. The Irish NGO GOAL has a program for street children in Freetown. In 2001, its staff identified 85 children on the street who

[16] Some very brave parents collected their children from the bush. It would have been senseless to ask these children to rejoin their commanders for the sake of the demobilization process.

had previously been reunified, and in 2002 another 14 had been identified by the beginning of May.

Even in those cases that are going well, it is difficult to know what may occur over time. If, once the euphoria of peace and security has dissipated, and if meaningful productive activities fail to materialize for young people, will families be disrupted or communities less accepting? The initial community acceptance and joy of reunification need to be solidified with employment opportunities and the assimilation of returning populations from the bush, IDP camps, Freetown, Guinea, and Liberia.

Reintegration, in terms of social acceptance, has been easiest for the children who were part of the CDF—most remained in their communities or close by and were respected by others in their villages as protectors. Ironically, a large number of the children who were with the CDF were excluded from the demobilization process and, thereby, prevented from taking part in the educational and training opportunities that have been provided for former child soldiers.

Children who had been abducted by the RUF, however, were not welcomed home with open arms. Initially, community members expressed hatred and fear of these children and never wanted to see them again. Many children with the RUF had been forced to kill family members or neighbors and had been living in the bush and fighting for five or more years. Even the NGO staff of the ICCs were initially targets of community hostility because of the presence of children who had been with the RUF.

This apparent success with reintegration was not achieved easily. Mediation with families, patient sensitization work in communities, traditional cleansing ceremonies, and caring supportive attention to the former child soldiers has brought about a remarkable transformation of children, families, and communities. In contrast to earlier hostility toward the return of former RUF child soldiers, during the team's visit community members spoke eloquently about their forgiveness for these children--they understood that the children had been forced to do what they did. This work has been supported by USAID and other donors; coordinated, monitored, and facilitated by UNICEF; and implemented by national and international NGOs. The heroes of the process, the ones who have been on the front line and made it work, have been the Sierra Leonean staff, community leaders, and grassroots volunteers.

Critical Elements

At least six kinds of intervention seem to have contributed to successful family and community reintegration.

1. Community Sensitization

Chiefs and their counselors were a key entry point for local staff who did the sensitization work. They discussed with these traditional leaders the situation of the former child soldiers, stressing

that these children had been abducted and forced by adults to become part of the RUF. Eventually, chiefs allowed them to approach key people in the community, such as civil authorities, religious leaders, heads of male and female initiation societies, teachers, CDF leaders, the community Mammy Queen (an elected role model), youth leaders, medical personnel, and CBOs doing development work. These leaders, in turn, influenced other community members. ICC staff also went house-to-house in the surrounding areas to generate community acceptance of the children. Some shared facilities, such as a rehabilitated well or recreational equipment, with neighbors.

Sensitization Workshops

The sensitization process used by local IRC personnel included a highly participatory, two-day workshop in each chiefdom with a focus on peace building and conflict resolution. Participants identified local causes of conflict and traditional ways of resolving conflict (including approaching someone through an elder, showing remorse, and bowing and lying on the ground in front of someone you have wronged.) Participants discussed forgiveness and acceptance. They were asked to develop a role play of rebels attacking a town, abducting children, giving them drugs, and forcing them to fight. During the debriefing period after the role play, participants were asked what they saw and experienced in real life. Typically, this was the point in the workshops when attitudes began to change. The IRC staff discussed with participants how to help children during a crisis. They explained the assistance network and the ICCs. At the end of the workshop, a child welfare committee was formed. In turn, these chiefdom-level committees helped organize and conduct similar workshops at the section level.

2. Demobilization and Transition Period

After disarmament and initial screening in demobilization transit centers, some of the CDF children, and almost all of those who had been with the RUF, were sent to ICCs while family tracing took place.[17] As a matter of policy, the period of stay in ICCs was no more than 6 weeks. The vast majority of children transited through ICCs under the 6-week limit, an accomplishment for which organizations should be commended.

Most of the children who could not be reunified within 6 weeks were either placed in foster care, or, for those who were older, allowed to live in small groups with some supervision. Although relatively brief, this period of transition was important. Activities focused on a return to normal life, such as regular schedule, chores, classes, play, artwork, singing, and learning culturally appropriate behavior. There was no therapy in a Western sense, though these activities did have therapeutic value.

[17] Most CDF children were living with their families during military conscription, so they simply returned to their families. Most RUF children had been abducted and were, therefore, separated.

The policy developed by the MSWGCA, UNICEF, and its implementing partners indicates that children are best cared for in family or family-like situations–a philosophy that DCOF fully supports. IRC staff made compelling arguments, however, about the value of the ICC as a good transition from the fighting forces to civilian life. Their experience suggests that ICCs provided a crucial opportunity for children to rest—physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, and spiritually—and reflect upon their lives. At ICCs, children are able to let down their guard and think about how to rebuild relationships that have been broken, to review the positive things they learned during the separation from families, and to plan what kind of life they would like to have in the future.

Intensive psychological or psychiatric counseling or assistance did not seem to be warranted. The psychosocial support oriented toward normalization and expressive activities appears to be adequate. When queried about the number of reunified children that are having the greatest difficulty, UNICEF and IRC staff estimated that between 5 and 10 percent of children are struggling to reintegrate in their families and communities. Although the children who are struggling most certainly deserve assistance, the number seems remarkably small.

3. Tracing and Family Mediation

With the resumption of the DDR process in May 2001, the need for rapid tracing and reunification increased dramatically. UNICEF's partners and IRC were able to respond to the challenge. Children were documented using the forms of the tracing network. This information was sent to the organization responsible for tracing in the district of each child's origin. In most cases, it has been possible to find either surviving members of the immediate or extended family. Parents and relatives were sometimes unwilling to allow children to return. Sensitization and mediation was necessary in many cases for children who had been with the RUF. Providing information about the support that children were entitled to receive to return to school or to obtain skills training was part of the process of preparing for a child's return.

4. Return to Family and Community and Follow-Up

Made possible by tracing, family mediation and community sensitization, return to the family is probably the most important dimension of the healing process for former child soldiers. Agencies attempted to do this as quickly as possible. For children in an ICC in one district whose surviving family members were traced in another, the actual return home involved the agency running the ICC and the agency in the parents' district collaborating to arrange the return to the family.

Additional sensitization and mediation work was often required at the time of reunification and in the days and weeks that followed. Conflicts, sometimes serious, arose and mediation was necessary. In some cases this has been done by NGO staff, but in many cases it has been carried out by members of the community's child protection or child welfare committee.

While agencies have struggled to make follow-up visits to monitor reunified children, the dramatic increase in the demands on staff for tracing, transfer of children, and reunification

prevented the consistent follow-up called for in the standards developed by the CPN. Although it is possible that more staff and equipment (such as motorbikes) might have alleviated the situation, an important lesson for organizations in Sierra Leone was that it was impossible to do everything at the same time: operate at multiple demobilization sites, care for children at the ICCs, trace and reunify children, make regular follow-up visits for monitoring, and provide timely reintegration support. Initially, it was the follow-up that suffered. As soon as the ICCs emptied, organizations were better able to attend to the reintegration needs of children.

Implementing organizations should be realistic in their program design and timeline. One alternative to periodic monitoring visits by agency staff (at least for children who appear to be doing well) is to mobilize local CPCs through which community members and leaders take responsibility for ongoing monitoring.

5. Traditional Cleansing Ceremonies

Various organizations involved with the reintegration process stressed the importance of traditional cleansing ceremonies. These ceremonies seem to have been important in facilitating family and community reintegration, apparently making the children feel accepted and acceptable to their family members and others in the community. IRC reported helping communities to obtain the items needed for such ceremonies. The Christian Children's Fund assisted approximately 1,000 girls to participate in cleansing ceremonies.

6. School or Skills Training

The Community Education Investment Program (CEIP) was designed to enable former child soldiers to return to school. The program operates throughout the country, implemented by NGOs funded by UNICEF. For each demobilized child that a school enrolls, the school administration can chose one of three kits designed to assist 200 students for a year: (1) learning materials for students (such as exercise books, pens, and pencils), (2) teaching materials (such as chalk, blackboard paint, and pens), or (3) sports and recreational equipment. In return for accepting a former child soldier (who is provided a uniform and book bag), students, teachers, and administrators benefit, not just the demobilized child. This program facilitates social acceptance in schools and communities. Another program, intended for adolescents with little or no education who want to go to school, is Complementary Rapid Education for Primary School (CREPS). Through this accelerated program, students can complete the 6 years of primary school in three years.

Demobilized child soldiers also had the option of choosing skills training instead of school. The NCDDR skill training program lasted for 1 year. With private funds, including those from DCOF, UNICEF and IRC offered 2-year apprenticeship placements, an approach which had proven more effective in the Mozambique demobilization process than center-based training. Agricultural assistance packages are another option that some have chosen.

George's Story

"George" is a 16-year-old boy from Kenema District who has recently been reunified with his family. He decided to go to school rather than enter a skills training program because he was eager to learn. Some of his friends chose skills training over school, but he noticed that they could not read instructions, which made it difficult for them to master their vocation and earn a living. George said that there would always be time to learn a skill, but it was important to learn the basics. He is in Class 4 and was elected prefect for his class. As prefect, his responsibilities include keeping the class quiet and punctual. His favorite subjects are science and English. He would like to be a doctor when he is older so he can help people in his country.

The skills training component in Sierra Leone helps channel former child combatants into productive, normalizing activities that help them readjust to civilian and community life. A master tradesperson trains a young person, who often lives with the artisan and his or her family. In addition to providing vocational skills, it was reported that the apprenticeship also helps develop moral character and social training for the apprentice.

The team was concerned, however, that more young people are being trained in skills such as tailoring, tie and dying cloth, hairdressing, and carpentry than local economies will be able to absorb. Vocational training programs in many places, including Sierra Leone, have been plagued by the lack of markets. Without adequate employment opportunities, reintegrated adolescents may become discouraged and may be vulnerable to exploitation. Although vocational training programs may meet short-term needs to keep adolescents active in productive activities, they are not a guarantee of long-term productive employment.

KEY ISSUES FOR DCOF CONSIDERATION

DCOF should consider further action in Sierra Leone regarding the following three issues:

1. Girls who remain under the control of their abductors.
2. Community involvement in re-establishing and sustaining schools.
3. Documentation and dissemination of lessons learned.

Abducted Girls

Many girls who were abducted by the RUF, some who are now young women, remain under the control of their commanders or "bush husbands." On a daily basis, families make tracing requests for missing children, particularly girls. Those in remote areas have not yet had the opportunity to make such requests, and others have not done so because they have given up hope. It is likely that many of the abducted girls and young women are in Kono, Kailahun, or Makeni Districts, Freetown, or in Guinea, but others may be elsewhere in Sierra Leone or within the region since there has been much movement since the demobilization process ended.

Although there are no definitive estimates regarding how many girls were involved in or associated with the fighting forces, based on the rate of abductions of girls by the RUF, especially in 1999, child protection agencies believe that many more girls were involved with the fighting forces than have come through the DDR process. Some girls were freed during special releases arranged prior to or in the early stages of the demobilization process. As mentioned earlier in this report, only 274 girls have participated in the DDR program—8.5 percent of the total number of children.

Based on the reported experiences of the girls and young women who have come through the DDR process, it appears that most of the girls abducted were forced into sexual relationships with adult male members of the fighting forces. An unknown number have borne children as a result. According to agencies that have been working with the demobilized child soldiers, many such girls and young women may fear stigmatization and, therefore, be reluctant to return home. This was certainly the case with many of the boys who initially felt that return home was not an option. The RUF specifically sought to instill this feeling in abducted children to reduce the chances of their trying to escape. Many children only came to accept family reunification as a possibility after they reached the ICCs, through the work of the NGOs carrying out documentation, tracing, and family reunification.

Girls may feel that having a baby while with the RUF makes them unacceptable to their families due to the stigma and additional financial burden the children may place on their families. Finally, while the relationships were forced, the men in the relationships are likely to view the girls as their wives and be, therefore, unwilling to let girls return to their families. Further information is needed about the current situation of abducted girls.

Traditional cleansing ceremonies or healing rituals have been employed by several organizations

Mary's Return

IRC has started using video to show abducted girls that returning home is a possibility and to facilitate the delicate process negotiating their release. Through this initiative, interviews of parents of abducted children are taped and social workers try to locate the missing children. In March 2002, an IRC social worker in Kono District was informed by the family of a demobilized boy that he knew where his 14-year-old sister, "Mary" was being held by the former RUF commander. The boy was interviewed and videotaped, as was a plea by her uncle to the commander, in which he said, "We thank you for caring for Mary all this time and we are now ready to receive her back home. God bless you." Mary was traced to Kailahun District, where she was serving as the maid for the bush wife of the former commander. The commander and Mary were shown the video, which made a significant impression on the man. IRC staff were able to negotiate Mary's release and for the bush wife to accompany her. The latter came from the same area and had also been abducted. After seeing the video, she asked IRC to take her as well. To ensure his bush wife's return, however, the former commander insisted she bring with her the baby of a second wife who had gone off and left the child behind.

A reunification ceremony was held in Mary's home village, and everyone came to welcome her home. The first thing her parents did was wash Mary's feet and drink the water, an action they believed would prevent her from leaving again. Her sister held Mary in her lap and cried. People from the village came and touched her in amazement. A few days later, women from the village carried out a cleansing ceremony.

The brother of the bush wife who accompanied Mary is currently being traced. Her parents are believed to be dead. The family home was found destroyed, but people in her home area reported the brother had previously come to visit. They will inform IRC if he returns. In the meantime she has gone back to Kailahun and is keeping in contact with IRC through friends who occasionally travel to Kenema.

to assist young women to integrate back into their communities. While adults seem to increasingly understand that rape and other forms of sexual violence are not the fault of the girls, "cleansing" the girls of the violence against them appears to be a helpful strategy to leave the past behind and help them look toward the future.

Some agencies have initiated special outreach efforts to reach abducted girls. For example, IRC has begun to use video cameras to transmit messages between families and their daughters. Not only does this technology appear to be a useful means to assure girls that they will be welcomed back into their homes and communities, it seems to convey additional authority or legitimacy beyond that of a tracing officer or social worker.

Following the DCOF team's visit to Sierra Leone, in one month IRC identified approximately 80 young women around Koidu and Yengema in Kono who were abducted by the RUF and who remain separated from their families. Some are still under the age of 18, but the majority are in their early twenties. Many have babies and a few have four or five children. Some remain with their ex-combatant husbands, although others were abandoned by them and are living together in clusters. About half seem to want to go home, a quarter want to go and visit and come back, and others are uncertain. Some are engaged in various skills training or productive activities; others survive by exchanging sex for money. IRC has developed an action plan that includes mass tracing, video tracing, special reunification kits to facilitate family visits, referrals to gender-based violence services and women's groups, and reintegration support in Kono and other areas of origin.

Acknowledging that further information is needed about the experiences of abducted girls and girls associated with the fighting forces during captivity and reintegration, at least four aspects of the situation require attention in developing interventions to give these girls and young women a chance to come home. First, reaching the girls and young women who have not returned will require more intensive outreach than was necessary for the general demobilization.

Second, innovative means of communication and mediation between girls, their "bush husbands," and their families is required, because it is likely that many of these girls will have limited access to information about support for reunification and bush husbands will be reluctant to release them. The CPCs and other child-focused grassroots committees can play vitally important roles in identifying such girls, letting them know about available support for finding their family and informing local authorities. The committee can also help girls to access help from NGOs.

Third, it is a fundamental human right of girls and young women who were abducted to have the option to reunite with their families and make fully informed choices about their future. Failure to ensure this opportunity is not acceptable.

Fourth, and lastly, the agency capacity needed for tracing, family mediation, interim care, community sensitization, support for psychosocial readjustment to normal life, and reunification is present but starting to dissipate. The ICCs were almost empty at the time of the team's visit. NGO staff were being laid off or re-deployed. Funding cycles are coming to an end and tracing and family reunification is winding down. These capacities are needed to help missing girls return home. Prompt action is necessary before they are lost.

The USAID/West Africa Regional Program (WARP) has received Trafficking in Persons (TIP) funds and Victims of Torture (VOT) funds to support activities related to counseling and

treatment for women and children who are victims of sexually-based violence and torture in the Mano River Union region (Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia). Beneficiaries will include women who have been victims of abduction and forced marriage, and children who have experienced forced conscription as child soldiers or camp followers. Activities will include shelter and transit assistance, reintegration assistance, and media outreach to girls and young women who may still be separated from their families of origin. The experience in Sierra Leone has yielded important and useful lessons related to identifying and responding to the needs of this population. DCOF and its partners in Sierra Leone are in a position to provide technical assistance and support to the WARP as it implements this initiative.

Education

Education is an important post-conflict intervention, particularly in Sierra Leone where some seeds of the conflict came from the government's past failures to extend services equitably throughout the country. For peace to be maintained, it is essential that all parts of the country, particularly those that have been marginalized in terms of government services, see tangible benefits of peace. Many parents report that education for their children is a top priority in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict.

Challenges and opportunities abound in the education sector in Sierra Leone. One constraint is that many schools were destroyed or seriously damaged during the war; another is the lack of trained teachers. Poverty is a pervasive barrier, with many families unable to pay even minimal fees or purchase uniforms and supplies. In addition to the obvious educational value of restoring schooling, doing so has important psychosocial benefits for children by providing structure and normalizing activities after years of fear, upheaval, and displacement.

Because education is important and because schools are relatively easy to rebuild, this activity is popular with donors. It was reported that the World Bank was prepared to provide substantial funding in this area. USAID and other donors have made funding commitments and were making implementation arrangements at the time of the team's visit.

During DDR, UNICEF has been supporting the following three education programs:

1. Rapid Response Education Project provides 6 months of preparation for children to return to school.
2. Community Education Investment Program (CEIP) is designed to facilitate the return of demobilized child soldiers to school without providing benefits for the child soldiers alone. Instead, school materials (such as exercise books, pens, pencils, chalk, blackboard paint, and sports equipment) are provided to schools who waived entrance fees for demobilized child soldiers and other children associated with the fighting forces. As a result, the entire school and community benefitted, not only demobilized children.

3. Complementary Rapid Response for Primary Schools (CREPS) allows children to complete 6 years of primary education in 3 years. Though not exclusively targeted to older children, the program did meet some of the unique needs of adolescents who lost several years of schooling because of the war.

Both "hardware" and "software" issues require attention in re-establishing education. In other words, while structures and material inputs are important, community mobilization and involvement in the building, rehabilitation, and management of schools is equally–if not more–important. Sierra Leone is faced with important choices about the fundamental nature of its educational system. While the team had limited opportunities to explore the plans of the Ministry of Youth, Education, and Sports, at the time of the team's visit it appeared that the ministry's goal was to re-establish the same system that was in place at the beginning of the war, with teachers provided by the ministry, management of schools by ministry personnel, and very limited community involvement.

Significant experience elsewhere in the region suggests that a more community-oriented approach would be a better choice. Even if resources can be made available to rebuild schools, the government will be hard pressed to generate sufficient resources necessary to operate these schools on an ongoing basis–the failure to do so could fuel future conflict. A different approach would be for the government to express its commitment to education, admit its limitations, and commit itself to a partnership approach through which the responsibility of managing schools would be shared between representatives of the ministry and the community.

There is a precedent for partnership and strong community involvement in the way schools were developed for refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia in Guinea. IRC had responsibility for refugee education in much of Guinea, and, in effect, offered communities partnership and a package deal. Communities that wanted to establish a school had to form a school committee, build the walls of a school up to roof level, dig a well and a latrine, and identify someone with enough education to be trained as a teacher. IRC would then construct the roof, train a teacher, pay a stipend to the teacher, and provide school materials. Refugees are returning to Sierra Leone and bringing with them these experiences and skills in community management of schools. This is an important potential resource for the country. The ministry could take a similar approach and solicit the partnership of communities and the involvement of NGOs in the process of mobilizing communities to develop and help sustain schools. Will it re-create the system of the past and be a top-down structure with minimal involvement of parents, community leaders, and children, or will it be a system characterized by community ownership and involvement? Experience in numerous post-conflict countries suggests that the latter approach is the wisest.

When in Makeni, the team met with Daniel Mye-Kamara, a former educator with Caritas Makeni who passionately endorsed the necessity of community involvement in re-establishing and maintaining schools. He stressed the importance of community ownership to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of schools, adding that communities should think of the local school as "our school." This sense of ownership would carry a sense of responsibility to ensure not only that a school is built, but that it is maintained and that what goes on within it is relevant to the students.

Lessons Learned

The team had the opportunity to ask IRC staff about lessons that they had learned concerning DDR and separated children. These are some of their observations:

- It is important to make active and early efforts to identify separated children and to use particular opportunities, such as at border crossing points and at the wharf where returning refugees were arriving.
- Rather than propose action, it is best to raise questions for the community to consider. What can we do to help children who have been abducted and involved in fighting to help them settle back into the community? What can we do to protect our children in a time of crisis?
- In future DDR processes, it will be important to better sensitize military observers responsible for the disarmament process about children's issues–in particular, child protection. Furthermore, even more should be invested in pre-sensitization and mass information campaigns for children which explain the DDR process.
- In a demobilization process, children and adults would be separated as soon as possible. It is important to do age-screening of children apart from adults, so children—including girls who are accompanying their "husbands"–can express themselves freely. Special civic education or health talks exclusively for women could have given girls and young women a more informed environment to begin to explore their options. Expectations should be discussed before leaving the demobilization site.
- It is important for the family to be part of the process of deciding what type of skills training a reunited adolescent should engage in because they will have a better understanding of what skills have local economic potential and because they have a stake in the adolescent becoming an economically productive part of the family.

Many Sierra Leonean refugees living in Guinea have experience with community schools in the refugee camps, a program that is based on the principles of community participation, ownership, and management. At its peak, the education program included 161 primary and secondary schools and more than 1,700 IRC-trained teachers. At the beginning of 2000, 65,000 students were enrolled. At the time of this writing, there are 45,000 students in the school system. The education program encompasses a broad range of activities including a traditional school curriculum, ongoing teacher-training sessions, vocational training in areas such as sewing; drafting and word processing; construction of schools, wells, and latrines; and a school-feeding program. Now that refugees are returning to Sierra Leone, they are bringing experiences and skills with them that will help agencies working in the education sector to strengthen community management of schools.

There is a debate in Sierra Leone about the nature of the committees that would manage the schools. The government has proposed, and the World Bank has endorsed, the establishment of school management committees (SMC) that would include government representatives, school inspectors, and community members. The structure of the SMC is still under discussion, but the SMC appears to have a high degree of central government control and involvement. Many NGOs have advocated for community teacher associations (CTA) or parent teacher associations (PTA). The CTAs or PTAs would have district or chiefdom representatives but would be primarily composed of community representatives. Either management model would require capacity building and resources, but the CTA/PTA model would arguably require greater support from outside sources. IRC is supporting the re-establishment of education in 150 schools in five districts in Sierra Leone and is encouraging the formation of a CTA for each school.

The ministry has reportedly been reluctant to incorporate returned refugee teachers into its schools in Sierra Leone, insisting that any teachers it pays must have completed the teacher training and been certified as teachers by the Government of Sierra Leone in keeping with pre-war criteria. This requirement may change, however. A study funded by IRC and carried out by the Eastern Polytechnic Institute in Sierra Leone found that the curriculum used in refugee schools in Guinea and Sierra Leone were essentially equivalent. Also, the large majority of the refugees return to Kono and Kailahun, districts that traditionally have been under-served by the government, and the ministry is finding that few of its trained teachers are interested in relocating to these districts. At the same time, IRC has about 700 teachers in schools it assists in Guinea, most of whom will be returning to these districts. In addition, the Freetown Teachers' College has set up a distance learning program to enable them to satisfy ministry standards for teachers. The ministry is reportedly prepared to allow teachers from refugee schools to teach while they are enrolled in the course, which can take 3 years to complete.

Documentation and Dissemination

Organizations in Sierra Leone are generating important experience and lessons regarding tracing and reunification, children's demobilization, social reintegration, how to reach girls associated with fighting forces, and how to balance the needs of demobilized children with other war-affected children. These lessons are relevant well-beyond Sierra Leone, and it is important that they be documented and disseminated among organizations doing work in child protection and social welfare in other countries. This experience has particular relevance for those countries that may soon be undertaking DDR programs, including Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Afghanistan.

DCOF encourages organizations in Sierra Leone, northern Uganda, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda to develop a formal and intentional process of exchanging experiences and lessons learned concerning child soldiers and other separated children. In particular, the situation in northern Uganda, where children have been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army, is similar to the one in Sierra Leone. The IRC program in Rwanda has developed innovative methods and is doing very thoughtful and innovative tracing, reunification,

and reintegration work from which other war-affected children and adults could benefit. After the team's visit to Sierra Leone, technical advisors for DCOF and Christian Children's Fund encouraged exchange of information between NGOs in Sierra Leone and Angola working with demobilization of child soldiers and family reunification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UNICEF

1. UNICEF should work with members of the tracing and child protection networks, including MSWGCA, to

- Develop estimates of the number of abducted children still missing
- Document cases not already included in the separated children database
- Trace as many of these children as possible

2. UNICEF should develop and submit to USAID/Sierra Leone and DCOF a proposal for the development and coordination of efforts to identify abducted children—in particular, girls—and to provide them opportunities to reunite with their families and reintegrate into their home communities.

3. UNICEF should work with members of the child protection and tracing networks to draw from their experiences in Sierra Leone lessons, approaches, methods, and tools potentially relevant to the disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers and tracing, family reunification, and community reintegration of former child soldiers and other separated children.

4. One objective of UNICEF's current agreement with DCOF is to produce a compendium of best practices on interim care, reunification, and reintegration of war-affected children. This objective should be completed by the end of the current grant period. If external assistance is needed to complete the compendium, DCOF funds from the current grant may be used to obtain it.

5. UNICEF should actively engage in the recently launched e-mail exchange among DCOF partners in Angola and Sierra Leone on the experiences of demobilization, tracing, reunification, and reintegration.

IRC

6. IRC should continue to use remaining DCOF funds to identify girls and young women who were abducted as girls and to provide them opportunities to reunite with their families and be reintegrated into their home communities.

7. IRC should play an active role in promoting the exchange of experiences among organizations working with children affected by armed conflict and document lessons, approaches, methods, and tools from its programs in Sierra Leone and elsewhere. As with UNICEF, IRC should actively engage in the recently launched e-mail exchange among DCOF partners in Angola and Sierra Leone on the experiences of demobilization, tracing, reunification, and reintegration.

DCOF

8. In providing any future support in Sierra Leone, DCOF should give priority to interventions in Kono, Kailahun, and Koinadugu Districts, mirroring the geographic priorities of the overall USAID program in Sierra Leone. These three districts have been historically under-served and experienced the heaviest destruction during the war. The possibility should remain open, however, to use DCOF funding in other parts of the country for effective implementation of efforts to enable abducted girls to return home.

9. DCOF should seek to provide financial and technical support for outreach, tracing, reunification, and reintegration support for abducted girls who have not been able to return home.

10. DCOF should collaborate closely with USAID's West Africa Regional Program (WARP) on the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Mano River Union program for women and children abducted or otherwise victimized by armed conflict. The proposed program has several components that complement or mirror UNICEF and IRC activities in Sierra Leone, and the two programs should support each other. DCOF should be proactive in promoting and facilitating collaboration. As an immediate first step, DCOF should seek further information on the planned activities of the Mano River Union program. The experience DCOF has gained on tracing and reunification through its partners in numerous countries places it in a position to provide relevant technical assistance, if needed, to WARP or its partners to assist in the design of a technically sound program.

11. As its second priority for the provision of funding in Sierra Leone, and as funds allow, DCOF should maintain communication with IRC, Save the Children (UK), CCF, UNICEF, and other stakeholders to determine whether strategic support could help Sierra Leone involve communities as active partners in initiating, managing, and developing education and training for children.

APPENDIX A – SCOPE OF WORK

The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund of USAID (DCOF) will send an assessment team to Sierra Leone April 22-May 4, 2002. The team is to include Lynne Cripe, Regional Technical Advisor, and John Williamson, DCOF Senior Technical Advisor. This assessment team will have three primary objectives:

1. Assess the use of DCOF funds provided to UNICEF through grant number AAG-G-00-99-00002.
2. Assess the use of DCOF funds provided to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) through grant number HRN-G-00-00009.
3. Assess the general situation in Sierra Leone as regards especially vulnerable children with a view toward identifying possible future areas of activity for DCOF.

The team is expected to gather information about the situation in Sierra Leone through contacts with representatives of organizations, including UNICEF, UNHCR, UNOCHA, the World Bank, USAID, relevant Government ministries, IRC, Save the Children Fund (UK), Christian Children's Fund, and other relevant civil society bodies. The team will seek to identify development activities planned or underway which could incorporate additional elements directed toward improving the safety, well-being, and development of especially vulnerable children. It will travel in-country, as possible, to sites where activities have been or are being implemented using DCOF funds. It will make such additional trips within the country as may be necessary and possible in relation to the third objective.

The team will prepare a report with its observations and recommendations in keeping with the following schedule:

- Distribution of initial draft for review and comments: May 31
- Distribution of final draft: June 30

APPENDIX B – ITINERARY

Time	Activity	Location	Personnel
April 24, 9:30	World Vision International, Child Protection	World Vision Int. Lumley Roundabout	Foday Sawi, Child Protection Project Manager
11:00	Save the Children UK, Programme Brief	SC Office, Murraytown, Freetown	SC Programme Manager, Patience
14:00	Campaign for Good Governance, Human Rights, Governance,	1 Richard Street Freetown	Olenka Randall
15:30	Talking Drum	Talking Drum, 44 Bathurst St. Freetown	Frances Fortune, Director
April 25, 9:00	Introduction to UNICEF Representative	UNICEF Office	Joanna away, Keith Wright
9:30	UNICEF Programme Brief by Programme Coordinator and Child Protection Officer (Includes Socio-Political Overview)	UNICEF Office C	Donald Robertshaw, Child Protection Officer
11:30	NCDDR/UNICEF Programme of Cooperation	NCDDR Office, Freetown	Dr. Kai Kai, Executive Secretary, NCDDR
12:30	Lunch	Freetown	Donald
13:30	Discuss with the Ministry of Social Work	MSWGCA, Office Freetown C	Teresa Vamboi, Chief Social Development Officer
15:00	IMC War Scars Skin Graft Surgery Project	Wiberforce, Kings Cross, Freetown C	IMC Director, Deputy, and Medical Director
17:00	COOPI, Reunified Children who have received IMC treatment	16 Benjamin Lane, Off Campbell Street, Freetown	Coopi, Child Protection Manger

Time	Activity	Location	Personnel
April 26, 7:00	Depart Freetown for Makeni by Road	Freetown, US Embassy	UNICEF Staff, Donald Robertshaw CPO, Marie Manyeh Asst. CPO
10:00	Briefing by National Commission for Social Action on Resettlement or NCDDR	Makeni	Caritas to Coordinate
11:00	Briefing regarding the Northern Province Child Protection Programme by UNICEF and Caritas Makeni	Makeni	Caritas Makeni, Field Coordinator
12:00	Lunch		
12:30	Visit to Child Protection Collabaration - UNICEF and Caritas Makeni. Visit reintegration programmes and meet children.	Makeni	Caritas Makeni, Field Coordinator
14:30	Depart Makeni by Road	Makeni	UNICEF Freetown
16:00	Visit CCF Child Protection Programme, Child Community Centre	Mawoma Village, Coya Chiefdom, Port Loko District	CCF Director to Coordinate
17:00	Depart for Freetown	Mawoma Village	UNICEF Freetown
18:30	Arrive Freetown	Freetown	
20:00	Dinner with UNICEF Rep and Other Donor	Smart Farm Freetown	Joanna Van Gerpen, UNICEF Rep.
Apr. 29, (National Holiday) 14:00-15:30	CCF, Briefing on Child Protection Programmes, with focus on Community Centres	CCF Office, Freetown	Director, CCF
April 30, 8:30	Depart Freetown for Kenema by WFP Helicopter	Freetown	UNICEF staff Attending: Donald Robertshaw CPO, Jean Lieby Reintegration, Glenis Taylor Asst CPO
10:15	Arrival Kenema	Kenema	UNICEF
11:00	Meeting with MSWGCA And Eastern Province Child Protection Committee Members to review the Child Protection Programme	Kenema	UNICEF Kenema to Coordinate
12:30	Lunch with UNHCR Briefing	Kenema, Reconcile	UNICEF to coordinate with UNHCR OIC

Time	Activity	Location	Personnel
13:30	Visit IRC - Interim Child Care Centre which supports Liberian and Sierra Leonean Separated Children	Kenema	IRC Kenema to Coordinate
15:00	Visit UNICEF and Ministry of Education's Complementary Rapid Education Programme	Kenema	UNICEF KENEMA AND MYES TO COORDINATE
17:00	Visit Caritas Kenema Family Tracing and Reunification Programme, visit reunified children.	Kenema	UNICEF to Coordinate with Caritas Kenema
18:30	Dinner with OCHA Rep. Odd Einer, UNAMSIL Human Right Isha, and UNAMSIL Military Observer Pat	Kenema	UNICEF to coordinate
May 1, 8:00	Sexual Gender Based Violence Programme and Response to Sexually Exploited Childern, UNICEF, MSWCGA, and IRC	Kenema	UNICEF and IRC SGBV to Coordinate
8:45	Depart for Gerihun IDP Camp	Kenema	UNICEF and IRC
9:15	Arrival at Gerihun IDP Camp, Child Protection Programmes at Gerihun Internally Displaced and Liberian Refugee Camp. UNICEF and IRC	Gerihun	IRC to Coordinate
11:00	Depart for Kenema	Kenema	UNICEF
11:45	Lunch	Kenema	
12:15	Depart for Daru by Road	Kenema	UNICEF
14:15	Arrival at Daru, Save the Children UK, Briefing on Child Protection Activities with a focus on Reintegration, funded by UNICEF	Daru	SC UK to coordinate
15:00	Save the Children, Skills Training Programmes	Daru	SC UK to coordinate
16:00	Joint Meeting with Children and Community Leaders discussing Child Reintegration	Daru	SC UK to coordinate
17:00	Depart Daru for Kenema by Road	Daru	UNICEF
19:00	Arrival Kenema	Kenema	
May 2, 8:30	Community Education Investment Programme, UNICEF, Ministry of Education, implemented by IRC	Kenema	IRC to coordinate
9:45	Depart for Yengema by Helicopter	Kenema	US Embassy to coordinate
10:15	Arrive Yengema	Yengema	
10:30	Rehabilitation and Resettlement Briefing by National Committee for Social Action	Yengema	IRC to coordinate
11:30	IRC Child Transit Centre and Reintegration Programmes	Yengema	IRC to coordinate
13:00	Lunch	Yengema	IRC to coordinate

Time	Activity	Location	Personnel
14:00	Sight visits to Reintegration Programmes	Yengema	IRC to coordinate
15:30	Discussion with Local Community Leaders regarding Child Protection Issues and Reintegration	Yengema	IRC to coordinate
16:30	Depart Yengema by Helicopter	Yengema	IRC to coordinate
17:45	Arrival in Freetown	Yengema	US Embassy
May 3, 10:00	Attend the National Child Protection Core Management Group Meeting	Freetown	UNICEF Freetown to Coordinate
11:00	Goal Street Children and Commercial Sex Trade Workers Programme	Goal, Siaka Stevens Office, Freetown	Goal, Zainab and Heidi
13:00	UNICEF & USAID Child Protection Debriefing	UNICEF, Freetown	UNICEF Freetown
14:30	Depart for UNAMSIL Helicopter,	Mammy Yoko	UNICEF Freetown to Coordinate
15:00	Check In UNAMSIL	Mammy Yoko	UNICEF Freetown to Coordinate
15:45	Depart Mammy Yoko, Freetown	Freetown	UNAMSIL
16:00	Arrival Conakry	Conakray	UNAMSIL

APPENDIX C – CONTACTS

Organization	Individuals	Contact Information
UNICEF	Joanna Van Gerpen, Representative	jvangerpen@unicef.org Government Central Medial Stores Compound Jomo Kenyatta Road P.O. Box 221 Freetown, Sierra Leone Tel: 232-22 226825 Fax: 232-22-235059
	Donald Robertshaw, Child Protection Officer	drobertshaw @unicef.org Cell: 232-76-601-309
	Keith Wright, Senior Program Coordinator	kwright@unicef.org
	Marie Manye, Assistant Child Protection Officer	mmanyeh@unicef.org
	Jean Lieby, Reintegration Office	jlieby@unicef.org
	Glenis Talyor, Asst. Child Protection Officer	gtaylor@unicef.org
	Joe Vere, Education Officer	jvere@unicef.org Cell: 232-76-626-541
IRC	Bryan Cox, Country Director	bryanc@theirc.org 38 Main Motor Road Wilberforce Freetown Tel: 232-22 232230
	Catherine Wiesner, Child Protection Coordinator	irccpusl@sierratel.sl
	Dean Piedmont, Child Protection Unit Programme Manager-East	Irc05@bushmail.net
	David Lamin, Child Protection Unit Programme Manager-South	Irc06@bushmail.net
	David Fortune, Child Protection Unit Asst. Program Manager-South	Irc06@bushmail.net

Organization	Individuals	Contact Information
	David Walker, Education Coordinator	irceducsl@sierratel.sl
	Julian Watson, Regional Education Advisor	julianw@theirc.org
USAID	David Atteberry, Sierra Leone Program Officer	DAtteberry@usaid.gov
	Julie Koenen-Grant, Sierra Leone Program Coordinator	Koenen-GrantJ@state.gov
UNOCHA	Dennis Johnson, Chief	chief.ocha@sierratel.sl Tel: 232-22-220749 13 Bath Street Brookfields Freetown
World Vision	Foday Sawi, Child Protection Program Manager	foday_sawi@wvi.org Tel: 22-234205 39 Freetown Road PMB 59 Freetown
Save the Children/UK	Patient Mashariki, Programme Manager Family Tracing and Reunification	scffreetown@sierratel.sl Sierra Leone Office 8 N'Doeka Drive Cockle Bay Off Aberdeen Raod Freetown Tel: 232-20 7703 5400
	Cornelius Williams, Sub-regional Separated Children's Programme Manager	scuk@aviso.ci Cocody Les Plateau Rue des Jardins 06 B.P. 2484 Baidjan o6 Cote d'Ivoire Tel: 225 22 409090
	Christine Lipohar, Sub-regional Separated Children Programme Coordinator	
	Alice Caulker, Family Tracing	boi_drs@yahoo.com
	Mike Charley, Family Tracing (?)-Daru	117060.3034@compuserve.com
Campaign for Good Governance	Abdul Tejan-Cole, Acting Coordinator Olayinka Creighton-Randall, Executive Assistant	atejancole@yahoo.com 1 Richmard Street P.O. Box 1437 Freetown Tel: 232-22 228454
Search for Common Ground	Frances Fortune, Country Director	Tdssl@sierratel.sl 44 Bathhusrt street Freetown Tel: 232-22 223082

Organization	Individuals	Contact Information
Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs	Teresa Vamboi, Chief Social Development Officer	
NCDDR	Mr. Charles Achodo, Technical Advisor Mrs. Olayinka Laggah, Child Reintergraion Officer	NCDDR Office, Freetown Tel. 232-22 229222
	Mr. Sheku Jalloh, Referrals Counseling Officer, Makeni	
	Ms.Raja Jandhyala	
	Charles Olyinka Laggah, Child Reintegration Officer Sheku Jalloh, Referral/Counseling Officer-Makeni	
Caritas Makeni	Maurice George Ellie, Supervisor, Child Protection Unit Sunkarie Kamani, Child Protection Officer Daniel Mye Kamara, CEIP Project Officer Osman Kamar, Supervisor Psychosocial Sector	caritasm@sierratel.sl
International Medical Corps	Ms. Tatjana Zulevic, Country Director	tzulevic@imc-sl.org 1 The Maize Wilberforce Freetown Tel: 232-22 230083
	Dr. Solomon Kebede, Medical Director	Mob. tel. 76-623581 kebedesol@yahoo.com
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Christian Children's Fund	Davidson Jonah, Country Director Mariama Zombo, Community Development Officer	ccf@sierratel.sl
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